

THE ABYSSINIA I KNEW



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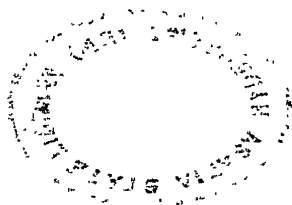
THE EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE
Chosen of God, Emperor of Abyssinia

THE ABYSSINIA I KNEW

by
GENERAL VIRGIN
MILITARY ADVISER
TO THE EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE

Translated from the Swedish

by
NAOMI WALFORD



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INTRODUCTION

THIS is the story of how I came to visit Abyssinia.

One day in January 1934 I was invited, together with some diplomats and army officers, to a farewell dinner at the house of the French military attaché in Stockholm. The attaché was relinquishing his post in Sweden to take over the command of a regiment stationed at Beirut, in Syria.

After dinner a group of us were standing round our host, and quite naturally the conversation turned on his new activities. I remarked that an officer in the army of one of the great Powers was to be envied, in that he had far greater opportunities of seeing the world, of testing his capacities in different sorts of work and of gaining experience of all kinds, than had an officer belonging to a small nation such as Sweden. The man then at the head of the Land Defence, who was standing beside me at the time, said to me quietly: "There's a chance for you too, if you like". At my look of surprise he added: 'Let's go home together. I want to talk to you.'

As we drove home through the winter darkness, he told me that the Emperor of Abyssinia had asked the Swedish Government whether a Swedish General might be put at his service as military and political adviser, and asked me whether I was

willing to accept the post. Without hesitating I replied that I was.

On the following day I had an interview with the Secretary of State for Defence and, after long negotiation by letter and telegram, an agreement was reached with the Abyssinian Government by the end of April 1934. Having been released from my post with the Government I left Stockholm on May 5th, 1934, and arrived on the 26th of the same month in Addis Ababa, where I immediately took up my duties.

The memories of Abyssinia now in the hands of the reader do not claim to form an exhaustive description of that singular country. My stay there was too short—a year and a half only—and the greater part of it was spent in Addis Ababa. Neither is this intended to be an impartial, historical account. For, that the necessary perspective is still beyond our reach. Events are here recorded as they appeared from the Abyssinian point of view. Owing to the present situation it has been impossible to enter into details of the military preparations, or of the deployment and disposition of the forces, etc.

To all those who have been kind enough to lend me photographs for illustration I would like to express sincere gratitude. In particular I have to thank Dr. Birch-Lindgren, Mr. Hammar, Lieutenant Heüman, Count Göran Posse, Frau Tügel and Herr Schusser of the German press. Unfortunately these thanks cannot reach Mr. Barber,

late of the *Chicago Tribune*, who put at my disposal many fine photographs. This clever journalist and likeable man, with whom I had the pleasure of working for a long time, died in Addis Ababa last November of climatic fever contracted during his service as Abyssinian correspondent to his paper.

STOCKHOLM, *January* 1936

THE JOURNEY OUT

May 1934

ACROSS Europe. From Stockholm on Saturday night to Hamburg on Sunday: Alstern is alive with yachts and rowing-boats, and the streets are deserted save when filled with marching Nazis in brown uniforms. Paris at noon on Monday: there is a haze over the Seine; the candles of the chestnut trees are kindling along the Champs Élysées; hotels are empty and prices high. Finally Marseilles on Wednesday afternoon: a sparkling piece of jewellery, with dust and dirt between the precious stones. Notre Dame de la Garde rises up into an opal sky, but in the harbour quarter the smell of beer mingles with that of the refuse-heaps in the gutter. Now and then comes a breath from the sea, dispersing the close air with its fresh saltiness and reminding one that the end of the journey is still far off.

At last I am on board the steamer which is to take us across the Mediterranean, through the Suez Canal and down the Red Sea to Jibuti in French Somaliland. The quay is full of the bustle of departure. Motor-horns hoot—no silent traffic here: people yell in every language under the sun;

winches puff and hiss and sirens howl; a music of inferno, wearing out ear-drums and nerves. On the gangway travellers and heavily-laden porters making their way on board jostle against friends and relatives going ashore after saying the last goodbyes. But away by the corner of the big warehouse, apart from the throng, stand a man and a woman in close embrace. He, a tall Marine infantryman, tries to hold himself upright, though his sunburned face is working; while she, a young girl in a light green jumper and a beret, lets the tears stream freely. Then I too am seized by the pain of parting and by loneliness. Forsaken and melancholy I single out from the crowd a woman dressed in black, standing so far from me that I cannot make out her face. To her I give features which are dear to me, and send her a silent greeting from my heart.

A stir runs through the crowd as the siren suddenly gives a few short blasts followed by a long-drawn-out roar. Gangways are drawn in and the last moorings cast loose. We seem for a moment to stand still while the quay recedes; then the bows swing to starboard and we move out through the narrow harbour mouth into the Mediterranean, which lies before us like a polished silver disc. The last we see of Marseilles is the narrow spire of Notre Dame, pointing upwards like an exhorting finger.

When I awoke next morning I saw through my open port-hole the cliffs of Corsica standing out

against a cloudless sky. The sea was still smooth and was the pale blue of Italian picture-postcards.

Hours passed and ran into days. Life on board took on the stamp of routine. The even throbbing of the engines was peaceful and soothing, yet spoke, too, of the power which bore us onward.

Scenes changed. The Lipari Islands started up out of the sea like prehistoric beasts, to sink again below the horizon. Vapour, heavy and threatening, hung about the flat-topped cone of Stromboli, and between Scylla and Charybdis whirlpools boiled as they did in Homer's time. In the distance came a glimpse of Crete, and at last the low, golden coast of Egypt rose out of the waves.

Port Said harbour was crowded with vessels. Hardly had we anchored before broad-nosed coal-barges made fast alongside, and by the light of arc-lamps hundreds of natives began to fill the bowels of the ship with fuel. Like dark shadows the men ran up and down the narrow gang-planks with coal-baskets balanced on their heads. Overseers in white turbans and long, green, shirt-like coats shouted their deep-throated exhortation, 'Otohei', the men in a shrill treble answering 'Allalahi'. This changing song rose and fell, and behind loomed the city, dark and secret. One was reminded of the times of the Pharaohs.

In silver-white moonlight we passed through the Suez Canal, the channel which connects two quarters of the globe. The desert broods in silence, its waves of sand forming a petrified ocean. By

dawn we had reached Ismailia. The sun climbed above the crests of mountains in Asia, and the sand turned rose colour, changing to bright yellow. At about midday we passed Suez, the little Arab village which has become a crucial point known throughout the world, and after a brief stop to deliver mails and take others on board we moved on out into the Red Sea. On the African side lay the hills of the Arabian Desert, and to the south-east Mount Sinai rose into the sky. The sea, despite its name, was a clear blue, and calm. Heat beat down upon us as through an opened furnace door, and in cabins and saloons electric fans whirled in vain. Passengers lay panting in deck-chairs. Heat was the topic of the day for any who had strength for conversation. To bathe was vain: the pumped-up sea-water had from the beginning a temperature of 90 degrees. The busiest people on board were the barman and the man who worked the ice-machine.

After three days and nights of suffering there appeared at noon the high mountain ridge of Bab-el-Mandeb, and by degrees the flat island of Perim also rose from the sea—the island in the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb which, owing to its strong British garrison, has become the gate of the Red Sea and of the southern end of the Suez Canal.

The annexation of Perim by the British has its own special history. During the construction of the Suez Canal, the French soon perceived the strategic importance of the island. They accordingly

despatched a squadron round the Cape of Good Hope to take possession of the island in the name of France. In the course of their long voyage these ships reached Aden, where they put in to renew their stores. As soon as the British commanding officer learned the Frenchmen's object, he arranged for them to be magnificently entertained. At the same time it was found to be difficult to raise the supplies needed for the ships, and the departure from Aden had to be put off from day to day. When at last the French were able to weigh anchor and arrived at Perim after a cruise of some days, it was to find the British flag hoisted on the island. The landing party were met by an officer who informed them that the island was in the possession of Her Majesty the Queen. After some hesitation the commander of the French squadron gave up the enterprise. Instead he set a course south-westwards and took possession of that part of the African coast which faces Aden, now known as French Somaliland.

At sunset we passed through the straits of Babel-Mandeb, and a few hours later anchor was dropped in the Jibuti roads.

The greater part of French Somaliland is desert on volcanic foundations, but after great efforts the French have succeeded in striking water at a depth of from twenty-five to thirty feet; and Jibuti, the capital, once a place of desolation without water or a blade of grass, now has water laid on and an electric power station, and is rich in vegetation.

The European quarter is well laid out, with fine public buildings. The native part, however, inhabited by Somali negroes, Arabs, Semites, Abyssinians and others, consists chiefly of very primitive mud-and-straw huts.

The one thing which the French, with all their industry and enterprise, have been unable to alter is the Heat, with a big H. We are near the Equator, and at noon the sun's rays fall in a vertical blaze. To walk in the sun without a pith helmet may mean death to a European. Remorsefully the Northerner recalls the many times he has grumbled at the cold at home, and remembers with regret the Air Ministry's reports of the ice in the Gulf of Bothnia immediately before his departure.

The chief importance of Jibuti lies in its character of seaport to Abyssinia. Communication between Addis Ababa, the capital, and Jibuti is maintained by the railway, built and owned by the French. Trains drawing passenger-coaches run only twice a week; one had just left when our steamer arrived, which enforced a stay in Jibuti of two days and three nights—days and nights not soon to be forgotten. The voyage down the Red Sea seemed in retrospect child's play compared with the sojourn in the hell-furnace of Jibuti.

At last came the hour of release, and early in the morning the train steamed out of Jibuti station. The railway runs at first through sheer desert, and sandy plains strewn with blocks of lava stretch as far as the eye can see. After a few hours' journey

the land begins to rise, and sparse green growth shows here and there, becoming thicker as we mount. In the afternoon we crossed the Abyssinian frontier, and at sunset reached our stopping-place for the night—the town of Diré Dawa, which lies over 3300 feet above the sea. Diré Dawa is a place of some importance, and its churches, hotels, hospitals and other European buildings, nestling among green trees, shone snow-white in the setting sun. The station itself presented a colourful and lively scene. Europeans, among whom Greeks, Frenchmen, Italians and Germans seemed most fully represented, jostled with natives of every sort of race. The babel of languages, the yells and the din, were at first overpowering, until eye and ear had accustomed themselves to sights and sounds.

After a gloriously cool night, spent at a fairly good hotel, the journey was resumed on the following day. We now found ourselves on a huge plateau, and the amount of climbing to be achieved that day was comparatively small. Hour after hour we rolled along through the wilderness. Cultivated land is rare, but everywhere great herds of camels, mules, donkeys, cattle and horses were grazing. Swift-footed gazelles sped into hiding in the bush as the train approached; big grey apes with long tails and red rumps sat perched in the trees, and against the clear blue, cloudless sky great birds of prey—eagles, vultures and hawks—floated on outstretched wings upon their airy sea.

At dusk we reached Hawash, a little station in the

middle of the desert near a river of the same name, where the railway company have built a guest-house adjoining the station.

Next morning began the last day of the long journey. West of Hawash rise mighty mountain ranges, and to the south Sukala, the holy mountain of Abyssinia, reaches a height of 10,000 feet. Winding, zigzagging and crossing countless bridges the train climbs upward and again upward. From Hawash we had 5600 feet to surmount before reaching the plateau upon which the capital is built.

At about four in the afternoon we reached the top, and the train, which at times during the climb had moved so slowly that one might have kept up with it on foot, now increased its speed. The track runs across a fertile, richly cultivated plain, which in the west is bounded by more hills. At the foot of these a forest lies spread; and here is hidden the capital of Abyssinia. Two mounds, however, rise above the tree-tops. On one of these stands the mausoleum of the Emperor Menelik and on the other the Cathedral, the cupola of which, covered with plates of real silver, glistens in the sun.

Some time later the train drew up at Addis Ababa station. The long journey was ended, and at the same moment I heard the sound of my own language. The Swedish colony, amounting to a score of people, were gathered on the platform to welcome their newly arrived fellow-countryman.

II

THE COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE

IN the north-eastern part of Africa between latitudes 5 and 15 north and longitudes 33 and 47 east, lies the Empire of Abyssinia ; or, as it is called in the native language, *Etiopiya Mangesta*. The country is rhomboid-shaped, with corners north, south, east and west, and its diagonals are of similar length, that from north to south being 780 miles, and the one from east to west 930.

The greater part of this territory is filled by a huge massif of volcanic origin. This massif, which in the interior consists of high table-lands slashed with ravines and valleys, and sprinkled with isolated peaks, forms at its circumference a continuous chain which divides Abyssinia proper from the adjoining lands. The highest peaks within this massif range from 13,000 to 14,000 feet, and lie within the provinces of Semien in the north, Wollo in the east, Kaffa in the south and Gojam in the west. To the south-west the Abyssinian highlands are divided from the Harar mountains by the Hawash valley and by a series of lakes strung out like a necklace down towards Lake Rudolf on the borders of Uganda. This Harar range, which forms a great arc from British Somaliland in the north-east across the

country to Kenya in the south-west, drops steeply to the Hawash valley and to the lakes just mentioned, while to the south and south-east the slopes are less abrupt, and only reach the level of the lowlands near the border of Italian Somaliland.

Bounded on the south by the Harar Mountains and on the west by the Abyssinian massif, a triangular tract of desert land stretches north-eastwards to the Red Sea. A similar district is to be found in the province of Ogaden in the south-east, near the frontier of Italian Somaliland. To the west, on the borders of the Sudan, the country at the foot of the hills consists largely of swamp.

Many rivers and streams rise in the highlands. Far to the north-west the Atbara and its tributary the Takazzé flow toward the Nile. In this part of Abyssinia lies also the biggest sheet of water in the country, Lake Tsana. This lake, whose surface is 5700 feet above the sea, has an approximate length from north to south of forty-eight miles, and a breadth of thirty-six. In the southern end of it are scattered a number of islands, on many of which are ancient monastery buildings. This fact has a certain importance, in that any suggested regulating of the level of the lake, whereby these monasteries would be rendered uninhabitable, has met with frantic opposition on the part of priests and people. Nevertheless, control of this water-level is an international question of exceptional importance—a question which cannot be gone into here, but which may affect the whole future existence of

Abyssinia. The Abbai, or Blue Nile, of which Lake Tsana is the source, brings the means of cultivation to large tracts of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, and also affects the overflowing of the Nile in Egypt.

The Blue Nile flows in a great curve through the country from Lake Tsana, first in a south-easterly, then a westerly and north-westerly direction, enclosing the province of Gojam, and dividing it from the heart of the country—the province of Shoa. It is in this latter province that the River Hawash has its source. After flowing in a south-easterly direction to the foot of the Harar Mountains, the Hawash makes a sharp bend and continues north-eastwards along the base of the range, to soak away in desert sand on the borders of French Somaliland.

From the Harar Mountains two big rivers, the Juba and the Webi Shebeli, flow south-eastwards to the Indian Ocean.

The amount of water in all Abyssinian rivers varies very much with the seasons. Those which during the rainy season from the end of June to the end of September are full and swift, carrying with them all that comes in their way, dwindle during the dry part of the year to small streams, or dry up altogether.

The boundaries of Abyssinia are:

In the north and north-east, the Italian colony of Eritrea.

In the east, French and British Somaliland.

In the south-east and south, Italian Somaliland, and Kenya and Uganda, which are British.

In the west, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.

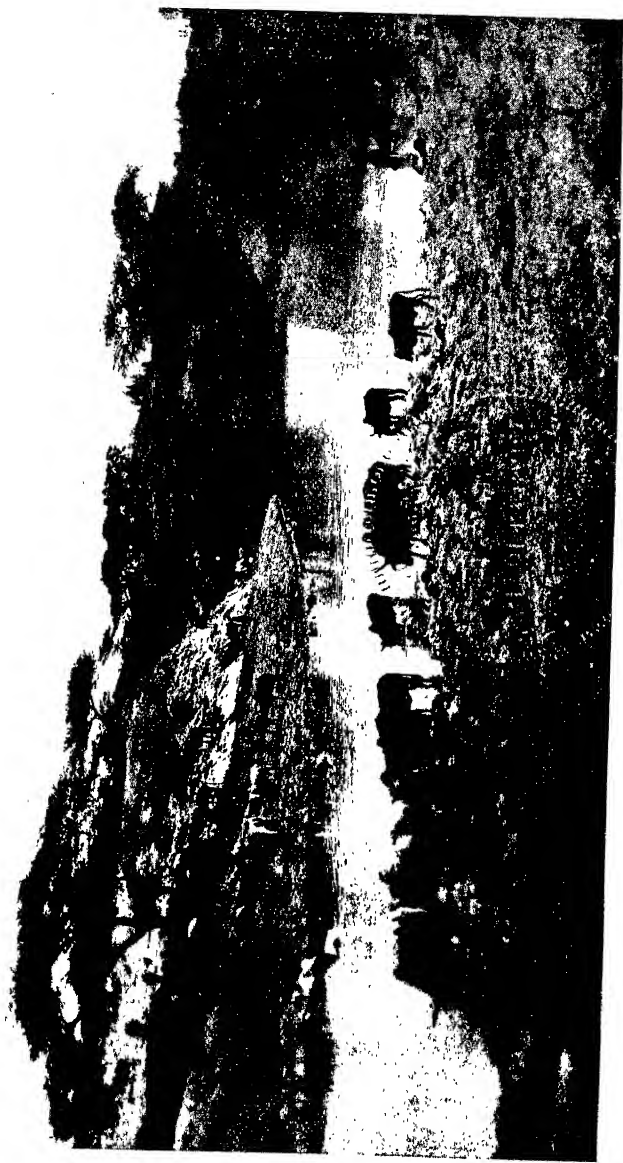
In other words, it is Britain, France and Italy who are Abyssinia's neighbours, and who separate her from the sea.

Abyssinia's chief means of support are agriculture and cattle-farming. The soil on the whole is not only fit for cultivation, but very fertile. This is true both of the high table-lands of Dega, where the climate, thanks to the high altitude, is temperate, and of the lower-lying Kolla, where it is tropical. Only the desert lands in the north-east and south-east, covered with *brousse* or bush growth, are unsuited to cultivation.

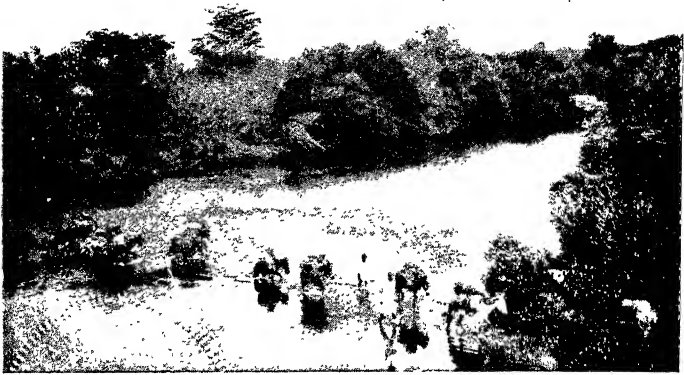
Agriculture, however, remains undeveloped. The Abyssinian farmer cultivates enough soil to support himself and his family, but usually without a thought of selling, and still less of export. The commonest varieties of grain are millet or *tieff* in the highlands, and in the lower districts *durra*. Besides these, maize, cotton and flax are grown. All European varieties of corn will thrive on the different levels of the hills, but are as a rule grown only by foreign colonists.

European and North African fruits are well suited to cultivation in Abyssinia. The native grapes, oranges and bananas are of specially good quality. Possibly the product best known abroad, however, is its coffee, which is widely exported. The income from this trade alone amounts to over a hundred million francs a year.

The best Abyssinian coffee is obtained from



ON THE BANKS OF THE AKAKI RIVER



A CARAVAN FORDING THE GUEBIÉ RIVER



BATHERS AT THE HOT SPRINGS OF WOLISSO

Harar and Arussi, and is of first-class quality, better than any other, no matter of what distinguished brand. Coffee is also grown in Jimma and Kaffa—whence it originally takes its name—but it is not so good as the first named. Unfortunately, in commerce the products of Jimma and Kaffa are distributed as prime Abyssinian coffee, which tends to damage the good reputation which Harar and Arussi coffee has so justly won.

The rearing of livestock is done on a large scale. It is reckoned that there are over ten million head of cattle in the country. Sheep, also very numerous, have short wool, and their skins are much sought after, especially for the manufacture of gloves. Besides this there are large numbers of donkeys and camels, while it is a point of honour with Abyssinians to breed the very finest horses and mules.

There is a small export of live animals, but the biggest trade is done in the sale of hides, and brings in from fifty to sixty million francs a year.

Abyssinia has also other resources. In the Kolla district there are huge forests; gold and other metals are to be found in the rivers and mountains; oil and lignite have been struck in the lowlands. This potential wealth, however, has been realised to a small extent only.

The total of Abyssinia's exports and imports is difficult to determine, owing to a lack of reliable statistics. The only certain figures to be obtained relate to goods transported by rail to and from Jibuti, and although this represents the principal means of

transport, there are caravan routes from Massawa and Assab in Eritrea, from Zeila and Berbera in British Somaliland and from Goré and Gambela near the border of the Sudan. The figures shown below, therefore, relating to goods carried by the Jibuti-Addis Ababa railway, represent only a part of the country's export and import trade over a corresponding period.

IMPORTS

| | 1933 (Tons) | 1934 (Tons) | Difference (Tons) |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Cotton (woven material, and thread) | 7568 | 6120 | - 1448 |
| Kerosene | 1327 | 1645 | + 318 |
| Petrol | 733 | 870 | + 137 |
| Salt | 9513 | 13,063 | + 3550 |
| Sugar | 1115 | 940 | - 175 |
| Soap | 229 | 240 | + 11 |
| Beer | 35 | 30 | - 5 |
| Wine | 132 | 105 | - 27 |
| Liqueurs | 89 | 93 | + 4 |
| Dates | 66 | 55 | - 11 |
| Rice | 164 | 146 | - 18 |
| Durra | 21 | .. | - 21 |
| Iron goods | 138 | 85 | - 53 |
| Glass ware | 174 | .. | - 174 |
| Sacks | 386 | 498 | + 112 |
| Tobacco | 95 | 83 | - 12 |
| Incense | 76 | 61 | - 15 |
| Automobiles | 205 | 211 | + 6 |
| Building materials | 3378 | 4405 | + 1027 |
| Pure alcohol | 67 | 36 | - 31 |
| General wares | 2086 | 2314 | + 228 |
| Piece goods | 114 | 147 | + 33 |
| Weapons and ammunition | 404 | 30 | - 374 |
| | 28,115 | 31,177 | + 3062 |

EXPORTS

| | 1933 (Tons) | 1934 (Tons) | Difference (Tons) |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Butter | 82 | 125 | + 43 |
| Coffee, Abyssinian | 6602 | 9407 | + 2805 |
| Coffee, Harar | 6977 | 7835 | + 858 |
| Coffee berries | 9 | 6 | - 3 |
| Wax | 370 | 399 | + 29 |
| Hides | 7945 | 5455 | - 2490 |
| Flour | .. | 12 | + 12 |
| Grain | 1196 | 3354 | + 2158 |
| Vegetables, dried | 25 | 86 | + 61 |
| Potatoes | 70 | 58 | - 12 |
| Piece goods | 494 | 589 | + 95 |
| General wares | 108 | 119 | + 11 |
| | 23,878 | 27,445 | + 3567 |

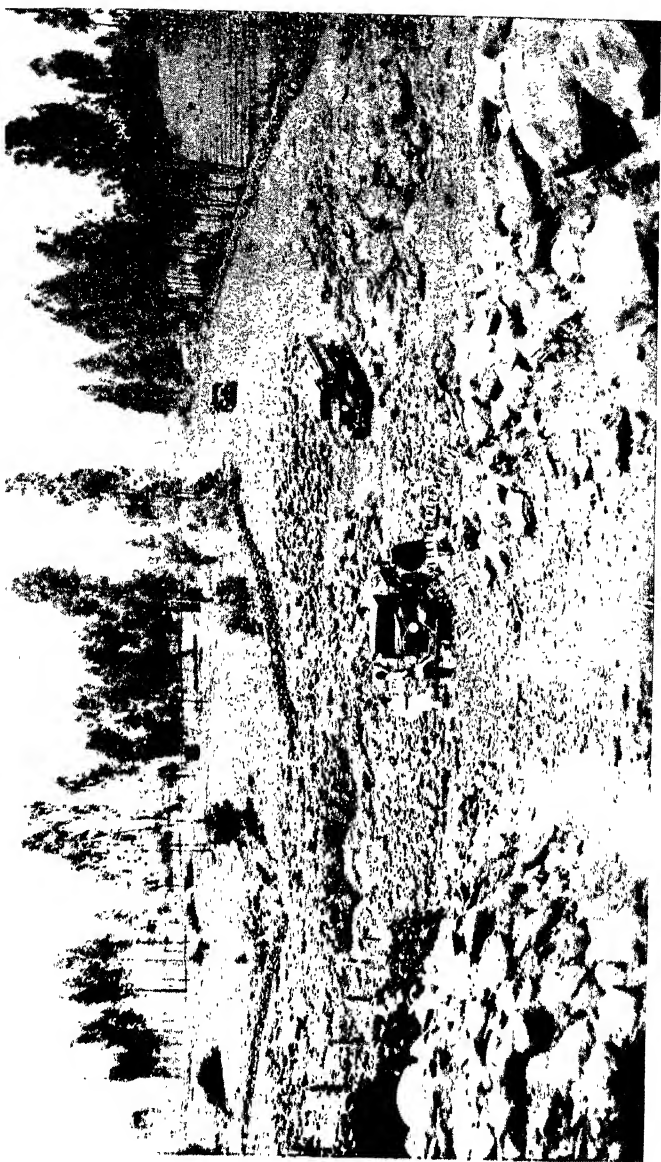
Communications in Abyssinia are few. There is a single railway. This connects the capital with Jibuti in French Somaliland. It was built at great expense with French money under great difficulties, and at the cost of life. By the conventions of February 6th, 1902, and March 6th and 8th, 1909, with additional clauses of December 7th, 1915, and others, the position of the railway has been regulated with regard to both the French and Abyssinian governments. The railway, completed in 1917, is 784 kilometres (490 miles) long. From Jibuti the line runs in a south-south-westerly direction to Diré Dawa, then follows the northern slopes of the Harar Mountains to Hawash, turning finally north-westwards to Addis Ababa. In the course of

this journey the train climbs from $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet to 8300 feet above sea-level.

Apart from the railway, Abyssinia's lines of communication have until lately consisted chiefly of twisting mule-tracks which crossed the rivers at fordable places, or over bridges of the simplest type, passable only during the dry season. Of recent times road building has begun, mostly in the form of *pistes*—that is to say, roads practicable for wheeled traffic, but formed by simply clearing and levelling the ground, without laying down any road metal. These roads, also, are as a rule impassable during the rains, but represent nevertheless a considerable advance, particularly as proper bridges are being constructed at the same time. Several such roads now exist round the larger towns and villages. A plan has been drawn up for their systematic extension, and a contract made with a Swiss engineering firm for the building of a road from Addis Ababa via Nekamte to Kurmuk on the borders of the Sudan, thus forming a continuation of the Addis Ababa-Jibuti line.

In its attempts to develop the country's roads the Government encounters great difficulties through lack of capital. An attempt has been made to solve the problem, as under the agreement with the Swiss firm, for instance, by raising loans abroad, to be met by tolls levied on road users.

The telegraph and telephone were introduced into Abyssinia by Menelik II (1889-1913). There is now an extensive telegraphic network over the



ROAD NEAR ADDIS ABABA



ROAD ('PISTE') DURING THE RAINY SEASON

country; furthermore, Addis Ababa and Harar have wireless stations, of which the former is in communication with London, Paris and Cairo. Addis Ababa has also the telephone, and is thereby connected with several places within the country as well as with Jibutí in French Somaliland.

The Abyssinian population, which is estimated at between eleven and twelve millions, is very irregularly distributed. In the highlands, where the climate is temperate and the agricultural conditions good, the population is proportionately much greater than in the low-lying districts where the burning sun dries out the soil and renders cultivation difficult. The desert districts are inhabited only by nomad races.

According to legend, the first inhabitants of Abyssinia were descendants of Noah's son Ham. After the confusion at Babel, two of the sons of Ham, Cush and Mizraim, made their way southward. They wandered through Arabia, crossed the Red Sea and landed on the African coast. Mizraim continued his journey westwards until he reached the valley of the Nile, while Cush remained on the Abyssinian border and founded Aksum, which is to this day Abyssinia's holy city.

This first colonisation was followed in about 2700 B.C. by a new migration. A people coming from Asia, called Sabaeans, settled in the country. From this race, which were characterised by their bronze-coloured complexion, regular features and tall stature, the present true Abyssinians—the Amhara—are thought to be descended. From an ethno-

logical point of view the Amhara are unique in Africa. Though their blood has certainly become mixed, it is believed to be of Indo-European origin. The shape of their heads, their features and their build testify to it; and their speech also, both the ancient Geez and the modern Amharic, bears this out, according to philologists. However that may be, the true Abyssinian is usually tall and well developed, with quite a dark skin, and his features are regular and finely drawn, often beautiful. He moves with dignity and grace. He is proud and courageous, and has the physical endurance of the hill-dweller. His greatest weakness is his scorn of work; he is a warrior, body and soul, and prefers to leave peaceful toil to others. In a word, he is the Spaniard of Africa.

Besides the true Abyssinians who are the ruling race, there are other big ethnological groups in the country. The largest of these is that of the Hamitic Galla people. These, who are true farmers—industrious, thrifty and of great endurance—live in the central and southern parts of the country. Their skin is a handsome copper colour, and their build slim and wiry. The Galla women have good features beneath raven-black hair, dressed closely to the head in numberless tiny hard plaits. When young they have, as the French writer de Felcourt expresses it: *'Cette admirable poitrine qui constitue le plus bel ornement de l'élément féminin'*.

In the eastern districts adjoining French, British and Italian Somaliland live the Hamitic peoples, the Danakils and Somalis. The dividing line be-



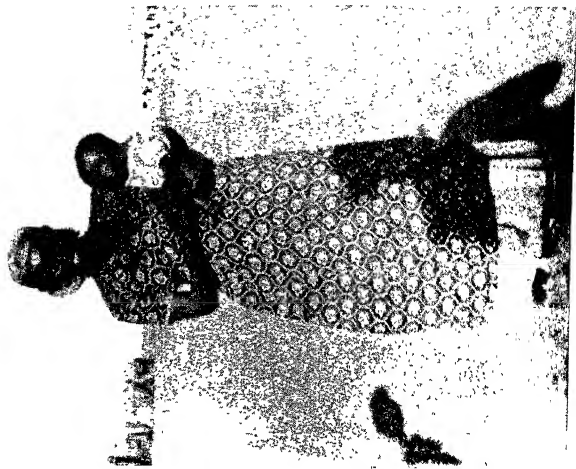
ABYSSINIAN TYPES (Amhara)



YOUNG ABYSSINIA



GALLA WOMEN



A SOMALI WOMAN

tween them corresponds approximately to the railway from Jibuti to Diré Dawa. The Danakils, who live north of this line, are warlike and savage. Like the Somalis they are nomads, and organised in clans under chieftains whose position is usually inherited. It is these tribes which cause unrest in the border districts, and which were cited by Italian propaganda to demonstrate the 'disorder' in Abyssinia.

Like our own Lapps, these tribes drive their herds from place to place in search of good grazing, without regard to political boundaries. Thus it is that skirmishes arise between different tribes. This is also true of their kinsmen in the neighbouring European colonies—not least in the Italian—so the Italian view is, to say the least, pharisaical.

On both sides of the Blue Nile, in the western part of Abyssinia, live the Shankalla, a negro race; and in the north-west and north are scattered groups of Fallasha, descendants of Jewish colonists.

Christianity was introduced into Abyssinia as early as the fourth century. A Tyrian merchant is said to have come to the country to trade. He was accompanied by his two sons, Frumentius and Aedesius, who were Christians. On his way into the interior the merchant was set upon by natives, who killed him, and brought his two sons as captives to Aksum. There, however, they were well received by the reigning queen, who entrusted to them the education of her sons. When, after some time, Aedesius returned to Tyre, Frumentius betook himself to the Patriarch of Alexandria and suggested

to him that Abyssinia was ripe for Christianity. The Patriarch then ordained Frumentius, and sent him back to Aksum as bishop. Meanwhile the two former pupils of Frumentius, Abraham and Atsbaham, had succeeded their mother and now shared the throne. In the year 333 Frumentius baptized them, and for twenty-seven years longer worked in their country. By the time he died the whole country was won over to the new teaching.

After the death of Frumentius the Patriarch of Alexandria chose a new leader for the Abyssinian Church, and the tradition thus originated persists to this day. It is still the Patriarch who installs the *Abuna*, who is never chosen from among Abyssinia's own sons. Since the latter half of the twelfth century, however, the *Abuna* has had at his side a native prince of the Church, the *Etchegui*, who guards the Church's financial interests and superintends the administration of its property. As a result of Abyssinia's isolation, preserved until this century, religious customs and rites have in many cases remained unaltered since the days of earliest Christendom. The Abyssinian Church belongs to the Coptic-Monophysitic branch of Christianity.

When Mahomed began his teaching, the young King Armakh was on the throne of Aksum. He had been brought up in Arabia, and seems to have been on friendly terms with the Prophet. In consequence the Abyssinia of that day was not exposed to the invasion of Islam which flooded Northern Africa. In later centuries, however, the natives had re-

peatedly to resist Mahomedan efforts to conquer the country either peacefully or at the point of the sword. There are to be found, especially among the Galla people, many adherents to Mahomed's doctrine. Among the Gallas, as among the Danakils and Somalis, the number of heathen is also large.¹

The Abyssinian community is ordered on the same principle as that of European countries during the Middle Ages. Power is distributed from above according to a carefully graded and uniform scale. At the top of the hierarchy sits the Emperor: autocrat, commander-in-chief of the army, chief justice and leader of the whole administrative and social life of the country.

As helpers the Emperor has his ministers, and the heads of government departments. Immediately beneath him come the rulers of provinces, kingdoms or sultanates of which the Empire is made up. The post of ruler has until very recent times been heritable within certain families only—families which also claimed right of inheritance to the imperial crown. The present Emperor, however, has succeeded little by little in modifying this system, and at present all the governors, with two exceptions, are officials chosen by the Emperor himself.

A governor, so long as he enjoys the Emperor's

¹ Those interested in this and kindred questions are referred to Dr. Fride Hylander's interesting work, *A Year in a Tent*, published by Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsen, Stockholm, 1934.

confidence, can wield extensive power within his own province. Like the ancient Roman *praefectus* he holds in his hand all the political, military, judicial and administrative threads. Under the governor, who is answerable only to the Emperor, stand the head men of the districts and independent communities into which the province is divided. These heads, or *choums*, combine the duties of military, judicial and civil officers in one person. They have also to collect taxes, and to keep the Emperor informed as to all that takes place within the district or community, and is of a nature to be brought to his notice.

The combining of military and civil functions is characteristic of Abyssinia. The reason for it is that from the earliest times the Abyssinian military force was formed, like the European armies of feudal days, of the suites of governors and *choums*. Each of these officials has at his disposal an armed force varying according to his position and the extent and resources of his area. He is responsible for the maintenance, arming and general equipment of his troops, and levies a special tax for this purpose within his province or district.

These provincial troops, which are more or less beyond the jurisdiction of the central Government, while successfully taking part in the defence of the nation from its enemies, used often to constitute a danger to their own countrymen. With their help, governors in different parts of the country have on

many occasions either fought out battles between themselves, or set themselves up against, and even overthrown, the imperial throne. With this in mind, the present Emperor has long sought to replace these troops by others recruited centrally, under officers nominated by the Government. Finally, in view of the training necessitated by modern warfare, the Emperor has begun the organisation of a regular standing army under the direction of a Belgian military commission; and for the training of officers he has founded a cadet school under Swedish direction.

The military forces of the Abyssinian Empire to-day consist therefore of (*a*) the followers of the governors and *choums*, (*b*) the troops of the central Government, and (*c*) the Emperor's standing army.

Of these categories (*a*) and (*b*) consist of men who lack all training other than that afforded them by their natural aptitude for warfare and their traditions. Their arms consist partly of modern weapons, partly of older models. It was troops of this type which in December 1934 met the Italian troops at Wal-Wal and Gerlogubi. As to the standing army, it is fully trained, armed and equipped in the modern manner.

III

THE CAPITAL CITY

THE present capital of the Abyssinian Empire has no venerable history. The town is, indeed, comparatively young. When the Emperor Menelik II in 1896 summoned his forces to meet the Italian invasion from Eritrea in the north he chose as a base the high, well-watered plain at the foot of the Entotto Mountains, where there was rich grazing for horses and mules. He found the place so beautiful, so healthy and so favourable from a strategic and political point of view, that after the crushing defeat of the Italians at Adowa he returned to the spot and resolved to establish there the capital of the nation which he had unified. Thus it was that less than forty years ago arose Addis Ababa, the 'New Flower'.

It must be admitted that the Emperor Menelik, in determining the site, chose well. Addis Ababa lies in the centre of the country and is well protected. The broken ground offered, and offers, good building sites. The climate, owing to the altitude, is delightful, in spite of the nearness to the Equator. When the thermometer in the lowlands stands at from 105 to 112 degrees, in Addis Ababa the tem-



ADDIS ABABA FROM THE AIR (the eastern part of the town)
Above, in the centre, the Great Gibi. Leading from it is the avenue to the Little Gibi, which is not shown.
Below, to the right of the avenue, the 'Swedish' hospital can be seen. The author's house is marked by an X



ADDIS ABABA FROM THE AIR (the western part of the town)
Above in the centre is St. Giyorgis' Cathedral and the statue of Menelik II.
Below this, in the middle of the picture, lies the market-place

perature is about 70, or even lower. As for scenery, few cities can have a lovelier situation. Round it rise the blue hills, and everywhere within it may be had glorious views over rolling fields, plains, forests and mountains.

During the greater part of the year the sun shines in Addis Ababa from a cloudless sky. From the end of June, however, until the middle of September the rains hold sway, characterised by heavy and regularly recurring storms. During this period the mornings are usually fine, but about noon or a little later a blue-black cloud-bank climbs above the eastern hills; and immediately afterwards thunder begins to rumble, lightning flashes across the sky in all directions and rain pours down in such volume that streets and roads soon become rivers. After a few hours the storm usually abates, and owing to the numbers of different levels within the city the rain-water runs off rapidly, and in an amazingly short time the streets are dry once more. The same performance is repeated next day and every day until the end of the rains, when the wet weather suddenly ceases, and the soil must go thirsty until the beginning of the next rainy season.

The height above the sea—about 10,000 feet—though favourable from the point of view of climate, presents nevertheless certain drawbacks to the European. The low air-pressure—water boils at 175 degrees Fahrenheit—is hard on the heart and makes breathing difficult. This is perhaps one of the reasons why one seldom or never sees a

European on foot in Addis Ababa; it is usual to ride or go by car to avoid exertion. Abyssinians are unaffected by these conditions. They are typical hillmen: tireless walkers and good runners. It is no unusual sight in Addis Ababa to see a flock of servants following their master's horse or car at a run.

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Arriving at Addis Ababa by train, and walking out on to the station steps, one receives no impression of having come to the capital of a country. In the open space before the station there stands indeed a gilded statue of the Lion of Abyssinia, but of streets or blocks of houses there is no sign. A broad tarred road leads from the station up to the higher ground in the north-east, and where it disappears buildings may be glimpsed among the eucalyptus trees.

Though the station certainly lies at some distance from the centre of the town, even there the effect is not that of a town in the European sense. The streets, or perhaps more rightly roads, are flanked here and there by buildings of more or less European pattern, but for long distances there are only trees, walls and fences to be seen, and behind these, at varying distances from the road, houses may be glimpsed between the trees, and *toukols* (round native huts roofed with mud or straw). It is neither town nor country, but something between the two; yet it has a population nearing a hundred thousand.

To obtain a general idea of the place, let us take

one of the many cars standing outside the station, and make a tour. After moving down the station slope we crawl on bottom gear up the hill towards the town. On the north side of the road, a few hundred yards from the station, flutters the Ethiopian tricolour, green, yellow and red, above some quite modest buildings. This is the War Ministry. On the other side of the road, beyond an open field, a yellowish-white smoke rises between the trees. Here are the town baths, where heating is supplied by nature; for the sulphurous water wells from the ground at a temperature of 155 degrees Fahrenheit.

Some way east of the War Ministry stands a handsome stone building, the Ministry of Labour; and as the car reaches the top of the long hill we find ourselves in an open space where stands a short column surmounted by a three-pointed star: a symbol of the Trinity. Here are situated the Ministry of Communications and the head post and telegraph offices, and here our road divides into branches running north, north-east and east. The first of these leads to the market, where there is brisk trading from morning till night. Here provisions are sold, and clothes, household things, fuel, donkeys, mules, saddles and harness, and fodder—all in a pleasant jumble. Every deal is accompanied by interminable parleys and much spirited gesticulation.

The north-easterly road passes under a triumphal arch, erected at the coronation of the present Emperor, to the hill upon which the Cathedral is

built. In front of this lofty building, which is surmounted by a cupola of pure silver, the gilded equestrian statue of Menelik II shines in the sunlight. In this neighbourhood also the 'Bibeltrogna Vänner'¹ Swedish mission have their two schools, one for boys and one for girls.

But we will now go eastwards along the Rue Makonnen, the main street of the city, in which most of the European shops are situated. After a drive of a few kilometres we come to another cross-roads, also adorned with an obelisk of Egyptian style—a copy of that which from immemorial times has stood in Aksum, the former capital. Here our road cuts across the avenue running north and south between the Great and Little Gibi. Gibi really means knoll, but here the word denotes the area containing the imperial buildings: dwelling-houses, reception-halls, courts of justice and other official places. The Great Gibi lies on a steep hillock to the south, surrounded by a high wall, and here, above a higgledy-piggledy of roofs and spires, soars the cupola of Menelik II's mausoleum. On this side of the Great Gibi, reckoning from the cross-roads, stands the new parliament house. Along the Great Gibi road, which also passes under a triumphal arch, there flows all day long an endless stream of people: chieftains and officials to attend the Emperor, seekers of justice to appeal to him as highest judge, country folk on a visit to the capital, loafers and beggars—all push on up to the Gibi hill.

¹ Literally, 'Friends faithful to the Bible'.



THE MARKET-PLACE, ADDIS ABABA



TYPICAL STREET SCENE IN ADDIS ABABA

But we will turn northwards along the avenue to the Little Gibi. Westward lies the Swedish quarter. Here the Swedish Evangelical Mission has one of its stations—a girls' school. Here is situated the Imperial Hospital, run by Swedish doctors and nurses, and in this district live many Swedish missionaries, doctors and officials. In the avenue itself stands the house of the *Abuna*, or Abyssinian archbishop, and beside it his private chapel is now under construction.

At the Little Gibi, which formerly consisted of a number of small pavilions, stands the palace which the Emperor caused to be built for the visit of the Swedish Crown Prince and Princess. The building, which is carried out in English style, is unusually well situated, with a view of the blue ridges of the Entotto Mountains. Opposite the eastern façade of the building fine gardens are laid out, with fountains, and westward the ground falls away in terraces into the valley of the Akaki River.

We now drive along a road leading westwards from the Little Gibi. After passing the Emperor's Swedish Hospital, where great works of extension¹ are now in progress, we come down into the delightful valley through which flows the Akaki River. On the opposite side of this lies a collection of grey buildings surrounded by high walls. This is the old prison, which has a sombre and decayed air.

A new prison, planned on modern lines, is now

¹ Unfortunately, owing to the war, these works have been suspended.

being erected in the northern part of the city, not far from the railway station.

Just past the prison wall the road bends, and before us rises once more the St. Giyorgis Cathedral, and the statue of the Emperor Menelik. Our tour is completed.

Between the main thoroughfares which we have followed run numberless streets, roads and paths, winding through woodland and forming a labyrinth within this collection of dwellings called a town; though it may best be compared to a huge permanent camp.

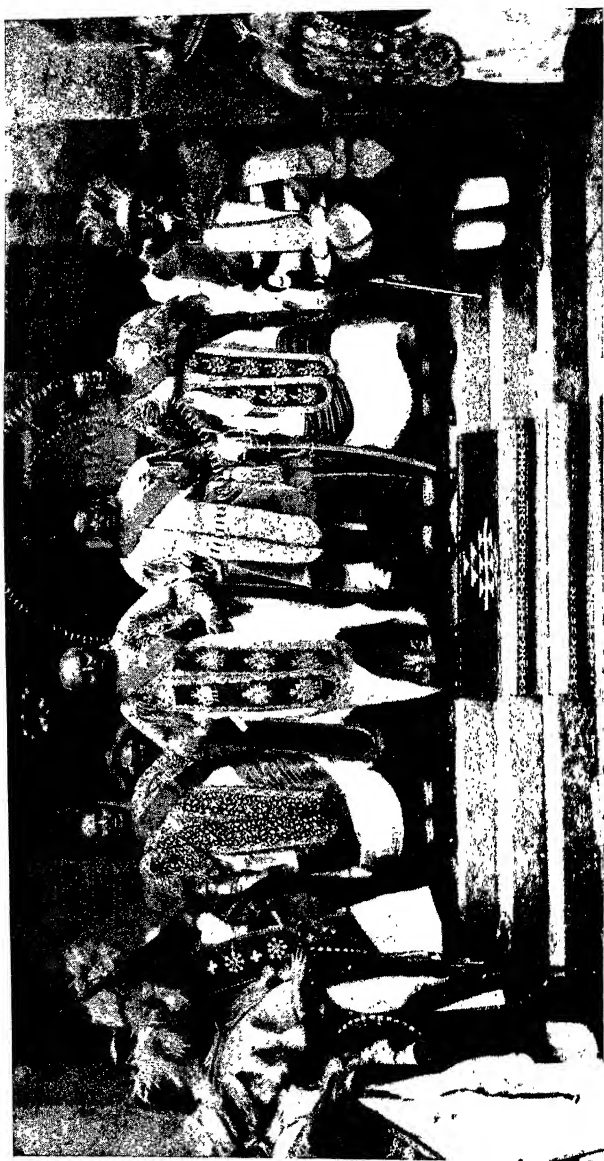
All day long there is busy traffic on these roads. Wayfarers in the picturesque dress of the country—long white shirt, narrow trousers, and the graceful mantle, the *shamma*, draped over the shoulders—move along barefooted, with swaying gait. Chiefs in short black cloaks riding on richly harnessed mules, and followed on foot by a servant carrying a rifle, gaze haughtily over the crowds. Dignified women in wide, shady hats, their *shammas* drawn up over their faces so that only the dark eyes are visible, cast a curious glance at the stranger from where they sit perched on mules, supported on either side by running servants. Guragis and Shan-kallas, negroes, push forward chattering, with great bundles on their curly heads. Strings of heavily laden donkeys step sedately in each other's tracks. Flocks of bleating sheep jostle from side to side of the road to avoid the furiously hooting motors. Here indeed is no silent traffic. Rather it seems as



ST. GIYORGIS' CATHEDRAL



PEOPLE'S WASH-HOUSE AT THE HOT SPRINGS
(Note that the washing is done with the feet)



GOVERNORS ASSEMBLED AT THE GREAT GIBI

From left to right of those in the centre: Ras Sioum, Ras Kassa, Ras Hailu and Ras Desta

if each driver were straining himself to the uttermost to produce with horn and siren the loudest and most persistent noises.

But when in the evening the sudden darkness falls, the streets are silenced as if by magic. All gates, doors and shutters are closed, and a strange quiet spreads over the city.

It lasts but a short time. Some prowling hyaena gives a long-drawn-out howl, and this is the signal for all the dogs in the city to give tongue. The concert of alternate barks and howls continues until dawn.

But in the blue-black sky the sharp sickle of the moon lies on its back, over the northern horizon tilts the Plough, and to the south the Southern Cross is shining, ringed by glittering stars—night in Africa!

IV

THE EMPEROR

IN the tenth century B.C., when King Solomon was reigning in Jerusalem, the realm of Abyssinia comprised not only the present Empire, but also southern Arabia and both shores of the Red Sea. The ruler of this mighty nation was Queen Makeda of Sheba, renowned for her beauty, wealth and power. The fame of the illustrious Makeda reached Jerusalem, and King Solomon sent ambassadors to her to propose an alliance between the two countries, and to invite her to visit his court. After some hesitation Makeda resolved to accept the invitation, and set forth for Jerusalem, bringing costly gifts and followed by a numerous and brilliant suite. She was received with the greatest honour, and, delighted with the wisdom and charm of her host, she remained for several months in the Judæan capital. During this time they became lovers, and immediately on her return to Abyssinia she gave birth to a son who received the name of Menelik. Legend tells us that this offspring of Solomon and Makeda became the founder of the dynasty which reigns in Abyssinia to this day. Even if the historical truth of the legend is difficult to prove, it can-

not be denied that the Abyssinian imperial house is one of the two oldest in the world: only the Japanese can dispute its place.

The descendants of Solomon and Makeda have not held the throne continuously, however. In the northern part of Abyssinia there had been from the earliest times numerous descendants of ancient Jewish colonists, the Fallasha, and at the beginning of the ninth century A.D. these rose in insurrection under the leadership of a Princess Judith and drove the Emperor Del-Naad from the throne. For more than forty years (933-977) Judith ruled over all Abyssinia with the exception of the kingdom of Shoa, whither the banished Emperor had fled. This retained its independence. After Judith's death the Christian princes rose up to throw off the Jewish yoke, and one of them, of the Ze Agow house, succeeded in grasping imperial power. His descendants reigned over Abyssinia for 340 years, while in Shoa Solomon's line remained the ruling house.

At the beginning of the fourteenth century a change was brought about by one of the most remarkable men the country has known, the monk Teklé-Haimanot. He was born in Shoa, and through his ascetic life and fiery preaching had won the deepest respect and could exert influence throughout the entire land; to this day he is venerated as one of the greatest saints of the Abyssinian Church. Profiting by his power, Teklé-Haimanot constrained the last Emperor of the house of Ze Agow to abdicate in favour of a prince of the house of Solomon.

Thus it was that the old dynasty returned to power without a blow being struck; since when it has retained its position, with the exception of a few short periods when the throne was held by usurpers.

Among the countless rulers of Solomon's house are many whose exploits have been recorded and passed down in folk-legends. The most noteworthy of them all, however, is without doubt Menelik II, the Gustavus Vasa of Abyssinia, who unified the Empire and doubled its size.

This remarkable man, whose original name was Sahle Mariam, was the son of Haile Melicot, ruler of the kingdom—as it then was—of Shoa. The Abyssinian Empire was at that time divided into kingdoms, whence originates the imperial title—still used—of 'King of Kings'. During his boyhood, Sahle Mariam was held prisoner by the Emperor Theodore III, who had banished the boy's father and seized his realm. At the age of nineteen, however, Sahle Mariam managed to escape from his prison in Magdala, and immediately afterwards proclaimed himself the rightful heir to the crown of Shoa. At the same time he took the name of Menelik, after the founder of his line.

From this date Menelik's political and military gifts, and his ability to bide his time, become noticeable. When Theodore III died in 1868, Menelik made no claim to the imperial throne, to which he was entitled by birth, but put himself loyally at the service of John, the new Emperor. Thanks to his military talents and to the wise



THE EMPEROR MENELIK II.



THE EMPRESS ZAUDITU

administrative measures he took within his own kingdom—or perhaps, more rightly, province—his fame spread throughout Abyssinia, and when in 1889 the Emperor John died suddenly as the result of an accident, Menelik was elected his successor by a vast majority.

Under Menelik's rule Abyssinia advanced towards greatness. He put an end to the civil strife which hitherto had worn out the country, and forced the proud vassals to serve the Emperor alone. He added to his dominions the rich provinces of the south and south-east—Kaffa, Jimma, Sidamo, Boran, Bale and Harar—while introducing more humane methods of warfare and forbidding the cruelties which until then had been characteristic of the Abyssinian armies. Like the great Roman conquerors he knew the art of making loyal servants and colleagues out of vanquished enemies. He introduced the telephone and telegraph. He caused roads to be laid down and bridges built, and imported motor-cars. To a French firm he gave authority to build the railway which connects the capital with the coast. Hospitals and general sanitation were introduced at his order, and vaccination was made compulsory. He reorganised the army, equipping it with modern weapons, and at Adowa, where the Italians were severely punished on March 1st, 1896, the new army stood the test. He kept in active communication with the great European Powers, and concluded with them many treaties which bear witness to his statesmanship.

Menelik had at his side a wife, the Empress Zauditu, who was worthy of him and to whose wise counsels he willingly listened both in matters of foreign policy and in military questions. It seems, indeed, to have been the Empress rather than the Emperor who planned the Adowa campaign and carried it out. Menelik, by a previous marriage, had several daughters but no son—a circumstance which was the cause of strife and revolution after his death.

At the end of his life Menelik chose his grandson, Lij Yassu, to succeed him. This was the son of a Mahomedan prince, Ras Michael, who, having been conquered by Menelik, was appointed by him to be Governor of Tigré, and received one of his daughters in marriage. The choice of this man for an heir caused general astonishment in the country, and great displeasure among the stiff-necked *rases*, many of whom considered themselves nearer the throne than the man chosen. As long as Menelik was alive, however, no one dared openly set himself against his will. But when in 1913 the Emperor died after a long illness, the opposition began to be felt. At first Lij Yassu, with the help of his father, whom he had appointed commander-in-chief of the army, succeeded in defending his throne. But when, at the outbreak of the Great War, he began to show sympathy with Germany, the Entente Powers took a hand, and in 1916 Lij Yassu was overthrown. Zauditu, Menelik's daughter, succeeded.

An attempt by Lij Yassu to win back his throne by force failed owing to the interference of Ras Tafari Makonnen: for it is with these stirring events that Abyssinia's present ruler appears on the political scene. Ras Tafari placed himself at the head of the Empress's troops and routed the army of the deposed monarch, whom he took prisoner. Thus he won the Empress's favour, and was chosen to be her co-ruler and heir.

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Ras Tafari Makonnen was born on July 23rd, 1891, in Harar. His father, Ras Makonnen, was a cousin of the Emperor Menelik, and one of his most distinguished generals. He had by him been appointed governor of the conquered sultanate of Harar. His son, Tafari Makonnen, grew up in the old city of Harar, where he was educated by French missionary monks and thus came to master both spoken and written French. He was an intelligent and ambitious boy with a thirst for knowledge, and at an early age showed an aptitude for statesmanship and for military affairs. When his father died in 1906, Tafari Makonnen succeeded him as Governor of Harar, and with great energy set himself to improve and develop the province now entrusted to him.

With the deposing of Lij Yassu in 1916 followed those events which raised the twenty-five-year-old Ras Tafari Makonnen to the height of power. From the beginning of his co-reign Ras Tafari

sought to follow the principles laid down by the Emperor Menelik; that is to say, to preserve his country's independence, to raise the material and intellectual levels of his people, and, in order to make this possible, to strengthen and consolidate the position of the central Government. In the fulfilment of this he had many difficulties to overcome. The foreign situation was disquieting. During the Great War those Powers which are Abyssinia's neighbours tried in many ways to interfere with the nation's politics. By cleverly playing off one against another, however, Ras Tafari was able to keep a free hand and prevent any one of his neighbours gaining too much of a hold over his country.

Home affairs were no less threatening. As in the case of Lij Yassu, Ras Tafari's promotion aroused envy and anger among the other pretenders. His plain intention to gather the power into his own hand, and also his efforts at reform, met with bitter opposition. His position was rendered still more difficult by the fact that the Empress, coerced by powerful *rases* and by the ultra-conservative priesthood which feared and hated all reforms, began to mistrust her co-ruler and to oppose his efforts. How Ras Tafari nevertheless contrived to overcome this resistance and strengthen his position can best be shown by recounting actual events at times when not only his crown but also his life was at stake.¹

The first open act of defiance did not, indeed,

¹ The account which follows is based upon verbal reports of participators in, or eye-witnesses of, the incidents.

threaten his position. But to give an idea, however slight, of conditions in Abyssinia at the time of Ras Tafari's accession, a short account of the course of events may be useful.

In 1916 there lived in the ancient town of Adowa young Ras Kassa, son of the Governor of Tigré. Kassa, who at this time was sixteen years old, was of high birth: the Emperor John was his great-grandfather. When the Emperor Menelik came into power, his grandfather had to be content to serve him as governor. Kassa's father, Ras Sioum, now held the same post in Makale.

Ras Kassa was an alert, courageous boy, proud of his lineage and fond of sports. He was in particular a daring rider, and one of his favourite pleasures was the taming of wild horses. From childhood he had been good friends with Lij Yassu. When news of the overthrow of the Government, Lij Yassu's imprisonment and the enthronement of Ras Tafari reached Adowa, Kassa declared boldly to all who would listen, that by no means did he intend to submit to the usurper Ras Tafari, but still regarded Lij Yassu as his rightful lord.

News of Kassa's attitude spread over the country with the rapidity with which news does travel in Africa, and Ras Tafari found himself obliged to act. He ordered Ras Sioum, Kassa's father, to see that the son henceforth behaved in a respectful and law-abiding manner. It now remained to be seen whether the birth-proud Governor of Tigré would obey. This, after some hesitation, he resolved to do, and

commanded Ras Kassa to present himself at Makale to answer for his behaviour. Ras Kassa, however, refused to obey the order, since, he said, his father had not expressed his own wish but the usurper's.

Once more Ras Sioum was forced to make the decision. Should he obey the ruler's command or listen to the call of his own blood? This time he did not hesitate. As soon as he had received his son's reply he left Makale for Adowa, where he arrived after a day and night march, followed by a thousand soldiers. Ras Kassa, who at the last moment had received warning of his father's approach, succeeded in leaving the city with some of his men. West of the city lies a plain crossed by a small river. In the ravine which this river had carved for itself Ras Kassa and his men took up their position and opened fire on Ras Sioum's charging men. Their numbers were too great, however, and the little defending force was on the point of being overwhelmed when Kassa gave the order to retreat. He himself succeeded in finding a horse at a neighbouring farm, and dashed away westwards.

For many months Ras Kassa lived in the Semien Mountains, gathering round him malcontents and robbers, and his father's men sought in vain to capture him. At last his father sent him word that all should be forgiven if he would return to Adowa and acknowledge his fault. Trusting to his promise, Kassa presented himself before his father carrying a knife on a string round his throat, and with a stone resting on the back of his neck—the Abys-

sinian token of submission and repentance. His men were immediately disarmed, however, and Kassa himself was stripped, thrown down and given forty strokes with a whip of hippopotamus hide. Though his skin was torn to shreds and blood poured down his back he made no sound. At last he fainted and was carried away in an exhausted condition to a hut where he lay for many weeks, hovering between life and death. Gradually his strong constitution got the better of his hurts, and he was taken to Addis Ababa, where he was imprisoned for about a year. During the whole of this time his faithful followers sought opportunities for his escape. Near the building which served as a jail horses always stood saddled, and one night Kassa did contrive to get out through a window, leap into the saddle and gallop away. However, his disappearance was immediately discovered, and police patrols all round the city were warned by telephone. At dawn Kassa was challenged by one of these, who met him north-west of the town, and when he failed to obey the command to halt the policeman fired. Kassa's horse was hit and fell. Kassa threw himself down behind its body and returned the fire. As he raised his head to aim, a bullet struck him in the forehead and he was killed instantly. Thus was cut off the youngest shoot on the tree of the old Tigréan rulers.

Far to the south-west, Dejazmatch Balcha ruled as governor. He was a man of the old stock, who had taken part in all the Emperor Menelik's campaigns,

and now ran his province in patriarchal fashion. He hated reforms and novelties with all his soul, and as news reached him from the capital of revolution, of new methods of rule, of the importation of foreigners, his anger and uneasiness increased. Ras Tafari, who well knew Balcha's mind, watched him carefully but took no action, being content to bide his time. Only when another of his powerful opponents had died—Fitaurari Haota Giyorgi, the Minister for War—did Ras Tafari consider the time ripe for rendering Balcha harmless. Through the Empress, who had strong sympathies with Balcha, he invited the governor to come to the capital. This invitation was ignored. Ras Tafari then induced the Empress to give Balcha a direct order to present himself. This time Balcha obeyed, but arrived at the head of an army of ten thousand, and pitched camp immediately outside Addis Ababa. Ras Tafari, hereby faced with a situation which could not be dealt with by force, sent the old warrior a courteous invitation to a meal at the Gibi, that he might confer with him. Balcha replied that if he might bring a bodyguard of six hundred men with him into the town, and as far as the palace, he would come. This was agreed to, and Balcha arrived at the Gibi on his richly harnessed mule, attended by all his generals and his most eminent warriors. Having seen his men take possession of the palace gates, he dismounted and walked into the reception-room. Here he was politely welcomed by Ras Tafari, who conducted him to the

dining-hall. A superb banquet ensued, lasting three hours, during which each sought to persuade his adversary of the justice of his own view and the error of the other's. When the table was cleared the position was the same as at the beginning, and Balcha departed with a veiled threat that he might have to resort to force to put a stop to the ruler's mischievous deeds. Ras Tafari remained serene throughout, and took a courteous farewell of the surly soldier.

Well fed, if not satisfied, Balcha rode back with his following through the sleeping city to his camp. When he reached it, in bright moonlight, he could not believe his eyes. Save for his own tents, the field was empty and deserted.

As soon as Balcha and his officers had left the camp for the Gibi, emissaries of Ras Tafari appeared, called the soldiers together and told them that they were setting themselves up against their lawful ruler. They threatened them with dire consequences, but finally announced that Ras Tafari would not only forgive them but would pay ten dollars¹ to every man who would return quietly home at once. After some doubt the soldiers, who were leaderless, accepted, and during the next hour or two payment was made to them from the sacks of money which had been brought. Batch after batch of soldiers moved off in the gathering darkness, and only a few minutes before Balcha's return had the last man disappeared.

¹ Menelik dollars, worth about 1/6 at par.

While the stricken Balcha gazed at the deserted encampment, word was brought to him that Ras Tafari had left the Gibi with a large force and was on the march towards the camp. Balcha then woke from his stupor and fled with his nearest followers to Addis Alam, a town thirty-five miles west of Addis Ababa, where he arrived the following morning. Obligated then to rest his exhausted animals, he took refuge in a church, begging the priests to grant him sanctuary.

Some hours later Ras Tafari, at the head of a powerful force, armed with machine-guns, arrived at the church. When the priests refused to deliver up Balcha, Ras Tafari ordered the machine-guns to be set up opposite the church door, declaring that if Balcha did not present himself within twenty minutes he would open fire. At this threat the priests gave in and Balcha was brought out and arrested. He remained imprisoned for the next couple of years, and during that time had the opportunity, by means of news which penetrates even prison walls, of following the course of events. Gradually he was persuaded that Ras Tafari desired the welfare of his people, and knew how best to obtain it. In a letter to the Emperor—Ras Tafari had meanwhile become Haile Selassie I—he admitted that he had been in the wrong, that he repented, and begged that, having no desire to live in a world where he no longer belonged, he might be allowed to enter a monastery. His petition was immediately granted, and the veteran is now spend-

ing in a monk's cell the last years of his varied life.

After these events the Empress's suspicion and fear of her co-ruler increased. Worked on as she was by the priests, she became more and more bigoted and unbalanced. At the deathbed of the Emperor Menelik, her father, she had promised to help and support Lij Yassu, and was now seized with remorse at having left her promise unfulfilled. Her former husband—she had been married to Ras Gugsa Olie, governor of the province of Amhara, but this marriage was dissolved on her accession—now did everything possible to infuse suspicion of Ras Tafari, whom Gugsa envied and hated. Then in the Empress's immediate circle were men ready to use any means of removing her co-ruler, whose reforms and modern views they could not or would not understand. The real instigator of the conspiracy against Ras Tafari has never been revealed, but one day in September 1928 words became deeds.

Early in the morning of that day Ras Tafari left the Little Gibi for the Great Gibi, whither he had been summoned by the Empress. As soon as he had stepped into the Empress's reception-hall, troops assembled, unknown to him, in the Gibi courtyards; the palace gates were shut, soldiers took up positions along the wall which surrounds the Gibi hill, and machine-guns were placed on housetops so as to command the roads of approach. The object was to capture Ras Tafari and depose him.

News of what was happening at the Great Gibi soon reached the ears of Ras Tafari's wife at the Little Gibi. Quickly summoning all the house-people who were at hand, she distributed weapons among them and ordered them to hasten to the relief of their lord. Soon a yelling crowd collected outside the Great Gibi and demanded that the doors should be opened. Ras Tafari found himself suddenly surrounded by a crowd of threatening soldiers who had been alarmed by the shouts and commotion, and seemed about to take violent action. Without for one instant losing his calmness or self-possession he walked slowly through them, and so great was the power of his personality that the soldiers unwillingly drew back and at his orders opened the gates. When his servants poured in he cried in a voice that carried far:

'The man who fires the first shot, be he of my own people or my opponent's, shall die.'

In the stillness which followed, Ras Tafari mounted his horse and rode quietly out through the gate, to be received with shouts of rejoicing from the mob outside. The psychological moment had passed. The coup had failed.

Ras Tafari's behaviour on this occasion won general approval among the Abyssinian people, who love to see personal courage in their leader. Many who had hitherto been his enemies now condemned the attempted coup. The Empress Zauditu was one of these who most eagerly denied

having had anything to do with it. To show her appreciation of him she formally made over to him the entire rule—being at this time very ill with diabetes—and on October 7th, 1928, with all pomp and ceremony, Tafari Makonnen was crowned Negus (king) of Abyssinia.

One who did not approve of this turn of events was Ras Gugsä, the Empress's former husband. He refused to acknowledge Tafari as Negus, and in the new year of 1930 he hoisted the flag of rebellion in his province. He succeeded, moreover, in rallying to his cause a large number of chiefs in the northern part of the country, and was soon able to muster a respectable-sized army. In the meantime, Negus Tafari was not inactive. He gathered troops from the districts loyal to him, and despatched the army thus formed northward, under the command of the present Minister for War, Ras Mulugueta. At the same time he made preparations to follow and take over the command. Before he had had time to leave the capital, however, Ras Mulugueta had, on March 31st, 1930, encountered Ras Gugsä's army at Ankim in the Wadela district. After a very bloody battle, during which aeroplanes were used for the first time in Abyssinian history as instruments of war, the rebel army was crushed. Gugsä himself fell, thus ridding Tafari of the most powerful and dangerous of his enemies. The new Negus was now undisputed lord, and only a couple of days later the outward symbol of his power—the imperial crown—was to be his.

As already mentioned, the Empress Zauditu had long been diabetic. When the news of Ras Gugsa's death reached her, a crisis set in which, on April 2nd, 1930, only two days after the battle, ended in her death. Some have tried to hint that hers was not a natural death, and that Negus Tafari was implicated in it. These malicious reports are without foundation. That the Empress died of the disease from which she had long suffered is fully testified by the doctors (among them Dr. Hanner) who attended her and were present at her deathbed.

On April 8th, 1930, Negus Tafari ascended the Abyssinian throne as Emperor Haile Selassie I, and seven months later the coronation took place with great ceremonial, in the presence of representatives of many foreign nations. Among these was a delegation from Sweden headed by the minister Friherre Harold Bildt.

By his wisdom, self-control, energy, courage and shrewdness the Emperor Haile Selassie had found his way round the obstacles which beset him; but in his fight for power he had also shown humanity and nobility of character. Apart from those enemies of his who fell in battle, their weapons in their hands, he had never taken anyone's life. The former Emperor, Lij Yassu, still lives in his 'gilded cage' in the Harar district, and receives all the honour due to his imperial birth. Dejazmatch Balcha remains in his monastery, but leaves it occasionally at the invitation of his sovereign. Thus he accompanied the Emperor when for the first



THE EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE AND THE EMPRESS MENEN
IN THEIR CORONATION ROBES



THE EMPEROR AT A RECEPTION IN THE NEW PALACE

time he inspected the 'Swedish' cadet school, and later sat in the place of honour at the lunch given by him.¹ Of the remaining former adversaries, not named here, some indeed are still in prison, but many others have been reinstated in their positions and are the Emperor's loyal allies. The streak of hardness and cruelty, characteristic of so many Oriental autocrats, is altogether lacking in the present Emperor of Abyssinia.

When the Emperor Haile Selassie I ascended the throne of his fathers he was mature; a grown man, hardened and tried in life's school. During his long period of regency he had accumulated experience and ability which well fitted him for his high office. In order to increase his knowledge still further, and to absorb new ideas, he made an extensive tour through Europe in 1924, in the course of which he visited Sweden. Knowledge gained on this tour he has since endeavoured to make fruitful in his Empire, and to that end he has invoked the aid of counsellors and helpers from those European countries which he considered ranked highest from both intellectual and material points of view.

As early as 1923, in spite of great opposition, the co-ruler, as he still was, acting as his own Foreign Secretary, succeeded in obtaining recognition for Abyssinia as a member of the League of Nations.

¹ Since this was written Lij Yassu has died, and Dejazmatch Balcha has left his monastery to serve the Emperor, in this time of trial, as a member of the Council.

On that occasion he undertook to abolish slavery within his realm—a promise which to the greatest extent yet possible he has striven to fulfil. All slave traffic is forbidden and punished very severely. It has not yet been possible, however, to free all slaves; for these are individuals, usually belonging to some negro race, who have served the same family for generation after generation, and are incapable of fending for themselves. A simultaneous freeing of all these slaves would constitute a social danger so great that such a thing has hitherto been impracticable. Also it is a fact that the greater number of freed slaves have refused to accept their liberation and have begged to be allowed to continue serving their former masters. The words slave and slavery have an evil sound in the civilised world, and rightly, but used in connection with Abyssinia they have not the same value as where the white man is concerned. The slave is most to be pitied when he is conscious of his slavery. This is not as a rule the case in Abyssinia, where the slave occupies the place of an ordinary servant, and never stops to reflect that he is not free. He leads, as a rule, a considerably happier and more carefree life than the free Abyssinian of low class who has to fight for his own existence. Naturally this does not alter the fact that the principle of abolition is the only right one. The problem is ever in the Emperor's mind, and he neglects no opportunity of coming nearer a solution which shall be to the best advantage of the individual and the State.

From the earliest times the imperial power has been unlimited, and varied only with the ability of the monarch to enforce it. No statutes of laws defining or modifying the authority of the throne existed until July 16th, 1931, when the Emperor Haile Selassie I gave the land a constitution. By this constitution Abyssinia is an indivisible state owing allegiance to the Emperor. The throne is heritable within Haile Selassie's line, which is unbroken since Menelik I, son of Solomon, King of Israel, and the Queen of Abyssinia, called Makeda of Sheba. All executive power is in the hands of the Emperor, and he exercises it according to law. A parliament consisting of two houses, the senate and the chamber of deputies, draws up the laws and considers questions set before it by the Emperor or raised by members. For a law to be valid, it must be passed by parliament and ratified by the Emperor. During the period when parliament is not sitting, the Emperor shall, if necessary for the maintenance of order or to meet a national emergency, issue decrees which shall be legally valid. Such decrees must, however, be submitted to parliament at its next sitting, and if not approved shall cease to be valid. Senators are chosen by the Emperor from among the most distinguished in the land, and members of the lower house by popular vote. At the setting up of the first chamber of deputies, however, the members were chosen by the Emperor. It is for him to fix the date of the sessions, and he may, should he find it expedient,

dissolve the chamber of deputies and proclaim a general election.

The Emperor alone is responsible for organising and issuing regulations and instructions for the different government departments. He appoints and dismisses military commanders and civil officials, and fixes their pay. It rests with him to declare war and make peace, and to negotiate and form alliances with foreign Powers. His also is the right to reprieve, and to shorten sentences of punishment.

Should the Emperor, by reason of illness or old age, be incapable of ruling, a regent shall be appointed in accordance with the law relating to the imperial house, and shall exercise full powers in the name of the Emperor.

The constitution further declares that every Abyssinian who fulfils certain requirements laid down by law shall be eligible for appointment as officer or civil servant, and at his promotion no considerations other than those of aptitude and merit shall be taken into account. No Abyssinian subject can be abducted, arrested or kept in confinement without a legal warrant. Finally the constitution defines the rights and duties of ministers in their capacity of heads of government departments, the position of judges and courts of justice, and other matters.

Although this constitution leaves the power in the Emperor's hands, it is remarkable from many points of view. By it the monarch sets up the law as the highest standard to which he too must con-

form, and at the same time renounces the right to make that law. Then also the constitution determines the freedom and privileges of the citizen, and affirms the right of all who are deserving and competent to serve the State. All these are principles which we take as a matter of course, but in a feudal State like that of Abyssinia, where noble birth has hitherto been almost the only consideration, they represent a revolution in social ideas.

Among the countless vital problems which the Emperor has to face there are two in particular to which he has perhaps devoted special attention and effort; namely, national defence and national education.

It is true that always in his foreign policy the Emperor has sought to place justice above force. On many occasions he has stressed his willingness to submit delicate questions of foreign policy to impartial arbitration. Nevertheless he sees very clearly that, not least in our own day, might is often accounted right; and a country which is to maintain freedom and independence must be ready to defend them with force if necessary. Therefore the Emperor pays great attention to the question of national defence. As Abyssinia manufactures no arms whatsoever, large stores of weapons, ammunition and other equipment have had to be imported from Europe. In the spring of 1935 general conscription was introduced, but there was no time to train the conscripts before the Italian invasion.

Another field in which the Emperor has been very active is, as before mentioned, that of education. He has called in educational authorities from abroad, and, with the help of the Empress, has founded a number of schools and colleges for both male and female students. He has issued orders that every soldier in the course of his military training shall learn to read and write. He has directed the priests in all towns and villages to give the children instruction, and has made an earnest appeal to all his subjects, irrespective of age, to share in this instruction; so that, in as short a time as possible, every Abyssinian shall be able to read and write. He has always shown great goodwill towards foreign missionaries whose work includes school-teaching, and has given them his support.

In his efforts to raise the intellectual and material standards of his people the Emperor has had two great obstacles to contend with: the lack of competent assistants and the difficulty of raising the necessary funds.

For the carrying out of reforms pioneers are needed. The Emperor Haile Selassie himself—wise, clear-sighted, clever and energetic—is an example to his people, working from early morning until late at night. Unhappily the same cannot be said of most of his officials. The Abyssinian is often intelligent, but, like the Oriental in general, he does not love work. He prefers to support himself and gain advancement in other ways than through labour. Changes and reforms have small appeal for

him. Although the Emperor no longer meets with any direct opposition, he has not that support, that efficiency and that sympathy from his employees which he has the right to expect. The result is that the Emperor has been obliged to give personal attention to nearly all affairs of state, and to settle details. But even this is not enough, for in the mere carrying out of these decisions the machinery often sticks. The Emperor has attempted to overcome this difficulty, partly by calling foreigners to his aid and partly by encouraging a new type of worker. Of the students who leave college with good reports, many every year are sent to Europe to complete their studies, and to learn Western methods. On their return these young men are given posts in the administration as assistants to the men of the old school. In this manner there is coming into being a body of officials and subordinates which more nearly corresponds to the Emperor's requirements than that which he has had to employ hitherto.

Abyssinia is an agricultural country. Other industry is almost entirely lacking. The people cultivate their land and feed their flocks in much the same way as did their forefathers in the time of the Old Testament. The different provinces live their separate lives, and communications are rudimentary. The wealth latent in the rich earth, the mighty forests, and in the core of the mountains, is exploited to a very small extent, so that the funds flowing into the Treasury are small, and only just

suffice for ordinary expenditure. Yet to educate the people, to develop communications and the natural resources of the land, and so on, the Emperor needs capital. In his work of reform he is faced with problems which at present one can foresee no possibility of solving, unless he is able to secure the support of foreign capital and foreign enterprise—and this has not been practicable during the past few years, as a result chiefly of the world depression and the uncertain state of foreign politics.

During 1935, owing to Italy's threatening behaviour, the Emperor was obliged to discontinue the work of reform, and spend the money on defence.

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A great burden of work and responsibility rests on Emperor Haile Selassie's shoulders. When one sees his slim figure, his unusually small and well-shaped hands, his finely cut features and his melancholy eyes for the first time, one finds it hard to believe that it is this man who has striven so mightily and won his way to power with such energy and endurance and who now leads with wisdom and strength his country's destiny. Yet when one has had the opportunity of coming nearer to him, of watching his keen intellect, his wise and unclouded thoughts, of witnessing his limitless capacity for work and his dignified calm in moments of difficulty or emergency, one finds it easier to understand how he has attained his position, and of what significance he is, not only for his own

country, but also in political situations far beyond its borders. It is said that no one is indispensable, but without exaggeration it may be affirmed that there is no man in Abyssinia to-day who could fully replace the Emperor. With him rests the to-be or not-to-be of the Empire, its inner unity, its outward strength and its future. With greater justice than even 'le Roi Soleil', the Emperor Haile Selassie might say, '*L'état, c'est moi!*'

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE IMPERIAL HOUSE

Sahle Selassie, *b.* 1795, *d.* 1847. King of Shoa

Haile Melicot
b. 1825, *d.* 1855
King of Shoa

Menelik II
b. 1844, *d.* 1913. King of
Shoa, 1864; Emperor,
1889. Daughters by a pre-
vious marriage:

Tagegne Woark = Dejazmatch Wolde
Michael Gudessa
of Doba

Ras Makonnen = Shemabit of
d. 1906. Gover- Urelu
nor of Harar

Zauditu, *b.* 1876, *d.* Shoarega = Ras Michael, Governor
1930. Empress, 1916. *b.* 1878, of Wollo. His daughter
(Married, thirdly, Ras *m.* 1892 by a former marriage:
Gugsa Olie. Marriage
dissolved 1916)

Lij Yassu, *b.* 1896,
d. 1935. Emperor,
1913. Deposed
1916

Sehine = Ras Asfau, Gover-
nor of Wolla

Menen = Ras Tafari Makonnen,
b. 1889, *b.* 1891. Regent, 1916;
Negus, 1928; Emperor
1930, under the name of
Haile Selassie I

Tagegne Woark = Ras Desta, Asfau-Wossen = Holeta Israel,
b. 1913 Governor *b.* 1916. Crown daughter of
of Boran Prince. Gover- Ras Sioum,
and Bale of Wollo. *m.* Governor of
1932 Tigré
Six children One daughter

Makonnen, Sahle Selassie
b. 1923.
Duke of
Harar

Zahai
b. 1920
Selassie
Gugsa

Zenebe-Woark = Ras Haile
b. 1918, *d.* 1933

THE EMPEROR'S BIRTHDAY

July 1934

TO-DAY, the twenty-third of July, is the Emperor's birthday. The rain which poured down during the night left off at nine this morning, just as the guard, with music and flying banners, left the barracks at the Little Gibi on its way to the Great Gibi. Here it is to parade while the Emperor holds court from ten o'clock and receives congratulations. To the tune of the Södermanland regimental march, company after company, battalion after battalion, swings past. The soldiers wear khaki with red facings on collar and cuffs, brown leather ammunition belts, brown packs, Mauser rifles with bayonets, caps of the same model as those of the Swedish Air Force, breeches and puttees, but have bare feet even on parade. The Abyssinian is accustomed from childhood to go barefoot, and his feet, which can walk on the roughest and sharpest surfaces, cannot bear the pressure of boots. The officers wear epaulettes fringed with lion's mane, and lion's mane round the crowns of their caps. The fine Arab horses of the riders arch their necks beneath the rich harness. From all quarters people are pouring along to see the show. The crowds are very great, and the *zeban-jas* (police) have much ado to keep the way clear.

The silhouette of the Great Gibi, jagged with roofs and pinnacles, stands out against a threatening sky. Outside its walls multitudes stand waiting. The guard marches in through the gates and forms a double line from them to the great reception hall on the western slope of the hill, where the day's ceremony is to take place. On the long staircase up to the hall representatives of the court, the Civil Service and the militia are assembled, displaying a magnificence of dress and colour which is almost overwhelming. Court dignitaries of greater or lesser degree are resplendent in black, light blue and dove-grey short cloaks over richly embroidered uniforms. *Dejazmatches Fitauraris* and *Kenjazmatches* (the Abyssinian generals) wear the *lanka*: a kind of round collar made of lion's mane, with long panels, richly embroidered with gold and silver, falling one over each shoulder, two on the chest and two down the back, like a priest's stole. On the left arm they carry a shield of buffalo hide, with buckle and edging of gold or silver. The finely engraved sword in its sheath of red or blue velvet hangs on the right side. The headdress consists of a golden circlet studded with jewels and surmounted by a deep fringe of lion's mane. Priests in long black robes and high, round, flat-topped caps of the same colour pace through the crowds, leaning on long staves with the Coptic Cross at the top. Here and there among the crowd a European may be seen, in uniform or tail coat.



CHIEFTAINS ON THE WAY TO THE EMPEROR'S BIRTHDAY LEVEE



THE CROWN PRINCE ASFAU-WOSSEN

Now the words of command thunder out. The troops present arms, and a fanfare is sounded as the foreign delegates arrive. Here also is magnificence. The ministers' cars are preceded and followed by lance-bearing *askaris*—legation guards—on horseback. Here is the British Minister's car: these *askaris* wear red turbans and white cloaks, and the colours of the United Kingdom flutter from their spears. Then comes the Italian Minister, whose bodyguard is dressed in light red coats and high caps like truncated cones, with black feathers, and bears blue pennons; the French Minister with guards in tricolour; the German Minister, whose escort wears blue turbans and red cloaks, and displays the swastika on its pennons; and many more. The diplomats are received at the foot of the steps by the Lord Chamberlain, and shown into an ante-room where champagne is being served.

At 10.15 the doors leading to the big reception-room are thrown open and the guests enter in single file; first the Diplomatic Corps, then officials, Civil Servants and others. The great hall, richly carpeted, is in half-light. On either side of a passageway left clear through the room sit the highest in the land—*rases* and ministers—on gilded chairs. At the end, on a dais, is the throne under a magnificent canopy of gold and red, and there sits the Emperor, who to-day is forty-three. Below and to the right is another lesser throne for the Crown Prince. Behind and beside the Imperial dais stand

those attendant on the Sovereign: officers of the guard, priests and officials.

His Majesty the Emperor Haile Selassie I, King of Kings, Chosen of God, Conquering Lion of the Line of Judah, descendant of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, sits motionless, wrapped in a black silken cloak which hides his other dress. One's thoughts involuntarily turn to the image of some Oriental god, until one approaches and can distinguish his features. It is a living, thinking, feeling individual who sits on the imperial throne of Abyssinia. The eyes are clear, wise and penetrating. From the high forehead springs the delicate, well-proportioned nose. The perhaps rather weak mouth is surrounded by a short beard and moustache, coal-black like his thick hair. The colour of his face is a dark golden-bronze. When he extends his unusually well-shaped, small but strong hand to a guest, a bright smile lights up the dark features and sad eyes.

One by one they come forward, bow to the throne, receive an imperial handshake, pass on with a bow to the Crown Prince, and retire. Soon the congratulatory ceremony is over.

Out of doors the sky has cleared. The sun gleams on the body-work of the cars, and weapons flash as the troops present arms to the departing guests.

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At eight o'clock that evening the Emperor and

Empress give a banquet in the same rooms in which the morning's reception took place. The guests assemble in a long gallery, carpeted with wine-coloured rugs, where plans of the table-seating are displayed. The European guests are in evening dress, with decorations, while the Abyssinians are for the most part dressed in native fashion: the men wearing dark clothes with the short black silk cloak, and the ladies long white pleated dresses of cotton woven with silk, with short capes of the finest red, green or grey materials. Although the ladies of the Diplomatic Corps show a wonderful display of toilettes, they do not put the Abyssinian ladies in the shade.

When the hour arrives, the doors of the throne-room are thrown open. By artificial light this hall is perhaps even more magnificent than by day. The walls, like the thick carpets, are dark red. On the pillars which break the line of wall are sconces, and from the white ceiling hangs a row of crystal candelabra which are a blaze of electric light.

The Emperor is once more upon the throne, but now the Empress is seated at his right hand. This great lady has the black eyes and fine features of the Abyssinian women. Her complexion is very fair, almost pale. According to European standards her Majesty is rather stout, but this in Oriental eyes is essential to feminine beauty. She wears a white dress with a cape of snow-white silk, the collar of which is thickly embroidered with gold. On her hair she wears a white silk net.

The Emperor wears the black silk cape, and the jewelled stars of the Order of Solomon and the Order of Menelik. The Crown Prince sits, as at the morning ceremony, below and to the right of the throne dais. He has a narrow, finely cut face, as yet ungraven by cares and trials. The Prince, who is only nineteen, was married at sixteen to a daughter of Ras Sioum of Tigré.

When the guests have shaken hands with their Majesties, all proceed to the adjoining dining-room, headed by their host and hostess. This room is large and handsome, decorated in blue and gold. The dinner-table is horseshoe-shaped, and adorned with magnificent table ornaments of silver, and masses of flowers. Their Majesties take their places at the end of the table. On the Emperor's left sits the doyenne of the Diplomatic Corps, then Ras Kassa and the Crown Prince; on the Empress's right the doyen of the Diplomatic Corps, the Crown Princess and Ras Sioum. Both the *rases* are elderly men of the imperial stock.

The menu is entirely European: *hors-d'œuvre*, clear soup, *pâtés*, chicken, cutlets on toast, asparagus, ices, dessert and sweets. With this is served Rhine wine, red wine, *tedj* and champagne. The Emperor's cellar is rightly famed. *Tedj* is a native drink brewed from honey, reminiscent in taste—and effect—of white Burgundy. The dinner service is of silver and has the imperial crown and the Ethiopian lion engraved upon it. The waiting is performed faultlessly by footmen in European

livery: green coats with stand-up collars and gold buttons, white lace jabots, red waistcoats and knee-breeches, white stockings and gloves, and patent leather shoes with buckles.

The meal being over, the company adjourns to the reception-room once more. The Empress resumes her throne, but the Emperor remains standing on the throne steps, and summons those with whom he wishes to speak. Coffee and liqueurs are served, and after the conversation has continued for some time a signal is given that the banquet is at an end. Once more the ceremony is repeated; the guests file up to the dais and receive a farewell handshake from their Majesties.

In the courtyard outside there is the usual press of motors, yet in spite of the roar of engines and the shouts one stands for a moment transfixed. Below the Gibi hill lies the city, sleeping in the silver-white moonlight. The mountains have faded into distance and above them sparkle the stars.

VI

THE FEAST OF MASKAL

THE rainy season in the Abyssinian highlands begins in the middle of June, which means that from then onwards every day brings with it a storm of thunder, rain and hail. These are of a violence and intensity which it is hard for us at home to realise. Lightning flashes over the sky in all directions, thunder rolls unceasingly and the rain pours down in torrents. The soaked earth can absorb no more. Rivers, many of which during the rest of the year are dried up, overflow their banks and sweep all before them. Water stands deep in fields and meadows, and when the sun peeps through the heavy clouds the air is full of steam. By the end of September, however, the rainy season is over, and then it is that Maskal, the Feast of the Cross, is celebrated—one of the greatest religious and secular festivals of the year.

September 28th is the true feast-day. It was upon this day that, according to legend, St. Helena rediscovered in Jerusalem the True Cross, and it is to commemorate this that the Coptic Church celebrates this feast. However, it appears that the Church, here as in many other cases, has taken over

and sanctioned a festival which was celebrated long before the adoption of the Christian faith. Originally it must have been the end of the rains and the return of the sun which was the occasion for the feast. Lately, also, the secular celebrations have come to take a larger and larger place on the programme. The Church, however, still takes the lead, and begins the festival week with a ceremony which takes place on September 22nd.

During my stay in Addis Ababa the ceremony was performed on Great Gibi hill. A stand was erected on the western slope, at the summit of which was placed the Emperor's throne. Below and somewhat to the right of the throne sat the Crown Prince, and the *Abuna*, or archbishop of Abyssinia. On either side seats were placed for other male members of the imperial house—the weaker sex takes no part in official Church festivals—and for foreign delegates. The remaining steps of the stand were reserved for the rest of the lords spiritual and temporal of the country, and for members of the legations and guests.

At the foot of the slope was an open space strewn with flowers and roofed in with canvas. All round spectators were packed. At a sign from the Emperor a procession of hundreds of priests and acolytes entered this open space, clad in brilliant vestments of every colour, and bearing crosses, censers and images of saints. It was a scene of unforgettable splendour. Red and blue umbrellas, fringed and embroidered with gold, were carried behind the

Church dignitaries, who were enveloped in mantles of black, yellow, red or white. The sun, breaking through the clouds, sparkled and glowed on crowns and tiaras, on crosses and on images of the Virgin, and flashed back from the silver of crosses and bells.

At the foot of the slope, immediately in front of the Emperor's throne, the procession halted, and the service began with a mass reminiscent of that of the Catholic Church, and served by three priests at the head of the column. Then, after some singing by a boys' choir, two acolytes bore forward a golden book, from which a priest read out the legend of St. Helena and the Cross. This over, the book was carried up by three priests to the *Abuna*, who put it to his lips, then handed it, first to the Emperor and then to the Crown Prince, who both kissed it. The book was then wrapped in red velvet, and laid, together with a cross of flowers, on a table placed at the foot of the stand.

Now began the part of the ritual most interesting to the foreigner. Ten priests, each carrying a long staff surmounted by a cross, and with cymbals in their hands, advanced on to the open flower-strewn space; and, accompanied by the singing of the other priests, the clash of cymbals and the thudding of drums, began a dance consisting of bowings and soft genuflections. This is the same dance which King David once danced before the Ark of the Covenant. The rise and fall of the singing, the silver sound of cymbals and the monotonous 'tum, ta-tum, tum, ta-tum' of the

drums were strangely moving. It was interesting to study the expressions of both singers and dancers. Faces old and young, bearded and furrowed or young and smooth, all shone with a spiritual light such as one may sometimes see in the faces of children making their first communion, or of Salvation Army proselytes. It may sound strange, but even the alien and sceptical spectator is held by a feeling of awe. In the dance of these priests there was certainly nothing ridiculous or profane.

After the dance there was more singing by the children and a mass served by three priests, whereupon the *Abuna* rose and preached a short sermon, and pronounced a benediction on the Emperor, his house and his subjects.

Then followed the final act of the ceremony. While the great choir of priests once more raised their voices in song, accompanied by the drums and cymbals, fresh flowers bound into the form of crosses were dealt out to all present. With that the celebration was over, and when the song had died away and a short silence had fallen, the throng dispersed, and, with the flower-crosses in their hands, returned to their daily work.

Early in the morning of September 28th, which is the greatest day of the Maskal feast, the streets and roads of Addis Ababa were packed with crowds in holiday dress, all pressing towards a common goal: the hill upon which the Cathedral of St. Giyorgis stands. Not only town dwellers had turned out; from villages far and wide the people

had poured in to celebrate and to enjoy the spectacle.

On the open space before the Cathedral, between it and the statue of the Emperor Menelik, a platform was set up for the imperial throne, and on either side of it were stands for statesmen, diplomats and special guests. Directly opposite the throne on the other side of the square a tall wooden cross was erected.

By the time the Emperor, the Crown Prince and little Prince Makonnen arrived here at 2.30, the place was filled with many thousands of people, and the balconies, windows and roofs of neighbouring buildings looked like bee-hives at swarming time. The imperial family having taken their places amid the loyal shouts of the crowd, the proceedings began with a ceremony similar to the one which had taken place at the Great Gibeon a week earlier. A procession of priests, bearing at its head the holy book, advanced to the throne, where the reading of the legend and the kissing ceremony was repeated. The procession then wound three times round the cross; a rite which was repeated by the Emperor and both princes.

With that the religious part of the ceremony was over, and when the Emperor had resumed his place on the throne the secular part began, consisting of a procession made up of the militia, the schools, Civil Servants, the police, holders of various other posts in the town, and finally a march past of the Imperial Guard.

All the proceedings were carried out with admirable precision, and bore witness to the Abyssinian talent for organisation. Hundreds upon hundreds, thousands upon thousands of men streamed past. All carried long wands or branches hung with flowers, which were thrown at the foot of the cross, as this was reached. Chieftains in magnificent dress riding richly decked mules or horses of the finest pedigree, and attended by armed escorts, advanced amid singing and fanfares. Scouts in European dress, school children decked with flowers, workmen of the city, all with shouldered rifles or swords at their sides, dignified officials and pale clerks—all moved forward in the dazzling sun to honour the Emperor and to lay their sprays of flowers at the foot of the cross. Now and then an old warrior, either riding or on foot, would break out of the procession and halt before the throne, where with wild gestures, waving sword or rifle round his head, he boasted of his exploits, counting up his vanquished enemies and protesting his allegiance to the Emperor. Thus hour after hour passed, till at last the rhythmic sound of the Guards' band could be heard in the distance, and shortly afterwards the close, straight ranks of the Guards regiments drew in sight. First came the infantry battalions, each consisting of three companies of rifles and one mounted machine-gun company; then the bombers, and the mountain guns carried on fine black mules; and finally the cavalry, of which the horses in each troop were

all of the same colour: the first troop white, the second piebald, then chestnut and then black.

With this the military parade was brought to an impressive and worthy conclusion, and the Emperor returned to the Gibi.

But in the streets the rejoicings continued until far into the night. Groups of torch-bearers poured along singing and dancing, and in the Cathedral square the cross and the thousands of branches which had been cast at its foot during the day blazed in a colossal bonfire.

VII

DAILY LIFE IN ADDIS ABABA

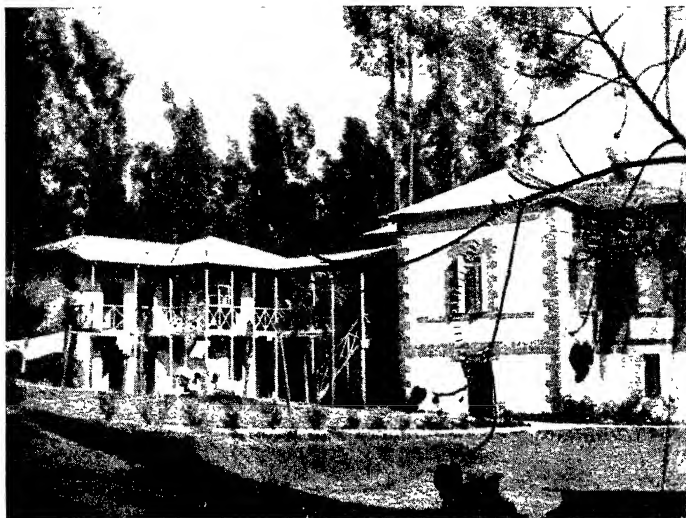
FOR the first four months of my stay in Addis Ababa I was the guest of the Swedish Consul, Dr. Hanner, at his beautiful house in the neighbourhood of the Little Gibi, opposite the 'Swedish' hospital. This was a very pleasant time, of which I have only happy memories. The house was run in an exemplary fashion by the two Swedish nurses, and thanks to their thoughtfulness and care one felt like a guest not in an African but in a Swedish home. In the evening, after the day's work was over, we would gather round the drawing-room fire; it was the rainy season, and a fire was very necessary. Evenings in Addis Ababa are cool even during the dry part of the year. After dinner we usually took out the cards, and some peaceful bridge most often ended the day. The party broke up as early as nine, as the climate, the altitude and the work made our need of rest and sleep much greater than in northern latitudes.

Partly because I could not claim the doctor's hospitality indefinitely, and partly because other factors made it necessary for me to have a house of my own, I had now to look about me for a suitable

place to live in. There are no flats or rooms to let in Addis Ababa; each family lives in a whole house, be it more or less European style, or a *toukol*. Thanks to Dr. Hanner's familiarity with conditions and his useful connections, I was able to secure one of the best houses in Addis Ababa, situated in that big thoroughfare, the Rue Makonnen, which runs right across the city. At the time of my arrival the house was inhabited by a Belgian, who returned to his own country in August 1934. It was necessary to put in hand many repairs, and to furnish the place throughout. Never before had I realised the enormous number of things needed to equip a house. Everything had to be bought, from curtain-rods—for which the Abyssinian spears proved excellently suited—to dish-cloths; for from Sweden I had brought only personal belongings. Thanks to the invaluable help of the Swedish hospital sisters I gradually collected most of what was needed, sending to Sweden for a number of things unobtainable in Addis Ababa.

By October 1934 the repairs were finished and I could move into my new home. As it may be of interest to hear what a 'European' house in Addis Ababa is like, I will give a short description of it.

The house, which belonged to the Minister for War, Ras Mulugueta, was built of stone in two floors, with a large square piece of ground adjoining it on the south-eastern side, surrounded by a high stone wall. The part nearest to the house was laid out as a garden, and on the rest of it were



MY HOUSE IN ADDIS ABABA

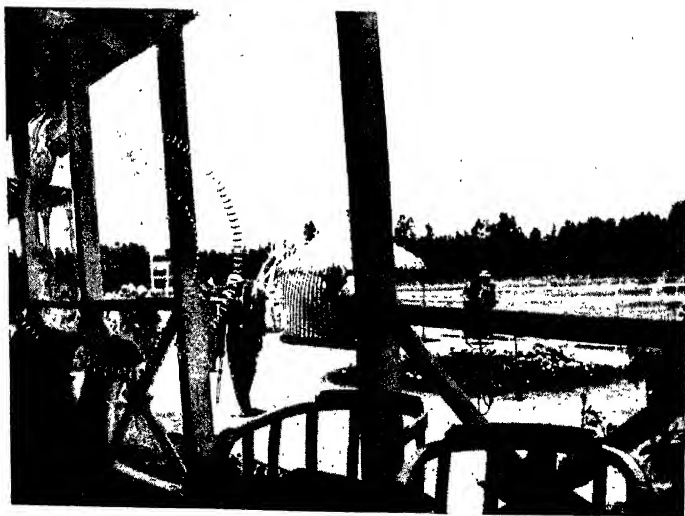
View from the garden, showing domestic offices on the left



SIDE FACING THE STREET



THE SWEDISH EVANGELICAL MISSION CHURCH
IN ADDIS ABABA



THE RACECOURSE SEEN FROM THE CLUB-HOUSE
VERANDAH

many eucalyptus trees. North-west of the main building, and connected with it by a covered way, were the domestic offices, consisting of kitchen, bathroom, laundry and ironing rooms and lavatory. Against the wall in the north-eastern corner of the grounds were the stables, and against the wall west of the main building was the garage. On the lawn behind, that is to say, north-west of the house, I caused a summer-house to be built in the *toukol* style, with a round, pointed thatched roof supported by pillars. At the south-eastern end of the grounds was the well. Water was not laid on to the house.

On the upper floor of the house, besides a large verandah-room, there were six rooms: drawing-room, smoking-room, writing-room, dining-room, bedroom and dressing-room. There was a corresponding number of rooms below, but these I used at first as spare rooms only.

An African household necessitates a crowd of servants. My original domestic staff consisted of first boy, second boy, cook, kitchen-boy, chauffeur, groom and night watchman: eight people. The wages were comparatively low, however; the first boy receiving eighteen dollars (about twenty-seven shillings), the chauffeur and the cook thirty dollars, and the rest from six to twelve dollars a month; and it is to be noted that for this they kept themselves in food, lodging and clothes. The first boy, chauffeur and groom, however, received new liveries about twice a year, which cost from eight

to fourteen dollars each. On shoes there was no outlay, as all went barefoot. Most of my staff were married and kept servants of their own; the wages of these may be imagined.

It was soon evident, however, that a grass-widower, absent from home the greater part of the day, would find difficulty in getting his staff to function and his house to run smoothly. That the first boy and the cook took a certain percentage on all purchases was an understood thing, and one hadn't a word to say to that. The difficulty lay in inducing the servants to do their work without supervision. The Abyssinian, like the Spaniard, loves to sit; either just sit, or preferably sit and talk. Hour after hour he will squat on his haunches in the same place, and chatter without ceasing, forgetting the flight of time and the work which awaits him.

But this was not all. One night, a couple of weeks after my move-in, the verandah door was forced and thieves took possession of sundry garments hanging in the hall. The police, when summoned, declared that even if the servants had not shared in the raid, it was they who had given directions to the thieves. However, the account was squared when, one day, coming home unexpectedly, I found not only all my boys but also their wives and relatives camping in my sitting-room. It was a not-unhumorous scene, when, on my sudden appearance, this rabble, amounting to a score of persons, rushed shrieking, gabbling, stumbling and falling

over each other out of the room and out of the house. I made short work of it and dismissed the lot; and gradually, after careful selection, assembled a new staff which proved excellent; willing, reliable, honest, and devoted to my interests. I remember these boys not only as good servants but also as loyal and self-sacrificing men.

Food was abundant in Addis Ababa, and prices, where native products were concerned, usually low. Beef, veal and mutton could be had for very low prices throughout the year except during Lent. Pork, which is not eaten by Abyssinians, was supplied by European farmers, but was dearer than in Sweden. Chickens could be had all the year round, four for a dollar. Eggs were ninety a dollar. Vegetables and fruit were very cheap. For a quarter of a dollar one could buy fifteen artichokes or a big bundle of asparagus, or twenty bananas or oranges. Fish was not good, and tasted of mud, but from December to February, when quick trains ran between Jibuti and Addis Ababa it was possible to obtain salt-water fish of good quality. The only game to be had, as a rule, was guinea-fowl and wild duck, which were tough and stringy. The snipe, which were sometimes available, were excellent, however. Preserves imported from Europe were expensive. The price of wines, spirits and tobacco was on the whole the same as in Sweden—perhaps somewhat cheaper. Cognac Bisquit, for instance, cost seven dollars, White Horse whisky 5.50, Italian vermouth three, and so

on, reckoning per bottle. Good cigars could be had for from twenty to twenty-five dollars a hundred, and the same number of cigarettes for 1.50 or two. Clothes were cheap. A lounge suit made to order by the best tailor—all is relative, of course—costs eighty-five to ninety dollars. For the rest it may be mentioned that one could purchase a good native-bred horse for hacking for fifty, whereas for a good mule one had to pay two hundred or more. The Abyssinian most often uses the horse as a pack-animal, while the mule is for riding. The Abyssinian horse, which has a fair dash of Arab blood in it, is small but swift and enduring, and very easy to feed. I received as a present from the Emperor a fine great animal imported from Australia, with a long stride and comfortable paces. Unfortunately it had been broken-in in cowboy-fashion—that is to say, it would answer neither to knee nor bridle but preferred to keep straight ahead at full gallop; a circumstance which, before we learned to know one another better, gave rise to a certain amount of strife and dissension. Among the mules there were many beautiful animals to be seen. They are usually pacers and very sure-footed, which, in a country like Abyssinia, with its steep and stony mountain paths, is of great importance. Their bridles and harness are often very gorgeous, adorned with silver, gold and precious stones.

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My ordinary working day in Addis Ababa passed

in this way: at 7.30 Wolde, the first boy, knocked at my door, stepped in with a bow nearly to the floor—Abyssinian bows are considerably deeper than Swedish ones—murmured the usual greeting, '*Di nasteli!*' (God's blessing) and opened the shutters. All windows in Addis Ababa are fitted with shutters, which are closed at nightfall. I then rose, washed and dressed. The bath-water was fetched by Guragis from the hot springs of the town. For every *tannika* of water (nearly four gallons) one paid a *besa*¹ at the springs, and two *besas* for the bringing of it home—a distance of a kilometre.

When I had breakfasted at 8.15, Gumatchu, the chauffeur, brought round the car, and I drove to my room at the Foreign Office, which is in the north-eastern part of the town, in a stone building originally built for the French Legation on the occasion of the Emperor's coronation. Here as a rule much work of different kinds awaited me: diplomatic, military and financial matters, home affairs and court business which had been referred to me, or concerning which the Emperor wished me to make suggestions. In the case of more important foreign affairs—particularly during the Italo-Abyssinian conflict—I collaborated always with the other two foreign advisers: namely, the legal adviser, Maître Auberson, a Swiss, and the financial adviser, Mr. Colson, from the United States. Maître Auberson had great forensic ability, and great facility of style, and was invaluable in

¹ One *besa* = $\frac{1}{32}$ nd of a dollar.

finding just the right turn of phrase in French, the language of nuances. Mr. Colson had a truly American capacity for work, combined with great intelligence, conscientiousness and a remarkable head for detail. I have the happiest memories of my work with them. Many hours, at different times of the day or night, we have sat round the table in my office to examine the situation, to contemplate possibilities and find what seemed to us the right solution, conscious all the time of our responsibility and knowing that peace, or the very existence of a nation, of a people, might be at stake.¹

The foreign legations—the Italian one in particular—had no love for this ‘trinity’, but we enjoyed the continued confidence of the Emperor and that

¹ That neither our tempers nor our humour failed us even during those anxious days is shown by the following ‘advertisement’ which we drew up late one Sunday evening after having been confronted at intervals throughout a long day with questions of a more or less momentous nature:

LA TRINITÉ, SOCIÉTÉ ANONYME
(VIRGIN, COLSON & AUBERSON)

Spécialités

Conseils en tous genres. Interviews soignées: tristes, optimistes, banales, sensationnelles, humoristiques, désagréables ou autres.

Rédactions de notes diplomatiques avec adjectifs ou sans adjectifs. Télégrammes en tous genres.

Préparations de discours impériaux et ministériels pour toutes cérémonies.

La maison traite soit sur commande, soit à forfait, et livre rapidement et à toute heure sans supplément de prix.

Travail garanti. Meilleures références.

Ouvert dimanches et fêtes.

Se recommande.

V., C., A., Trinité S.A.



THE AUTHOR IN HIS ROOM AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE



THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, H. E. BELATEN-GUэта HERUY

of his Foreign Minister. The latter, his Excellency Belaten-Guéta¹ Heruy, who had been educated by the Swedish missionary Cederquist, was a wise, cautious and pleasant man, who wished well to everyone. At times, particularly where the honour or independence of the country was concerned, he could speak out plainly enough. He was a great admirer of Sweden and always showed goodwill to Swedes. I personally stand greatly in his debt for his kindness to me throughout my stay in Abyssinia.

When one of the more important political questions was ripe for settlement we received an audience of the Emperor. In the presence of the Foreign Minister, the Director of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ato (Mr.) Tasffai Tagegne, and the Director of the *ministère de plume* Ato Wolde Giyorgis, who was also the Emperor's private secretary, the matter was read out in French and then translated by Ato Wolde Giyorgis into Amharic, although the Emperor both understands and speaks French well. It was very impressive to note how rapidly the Emperor grasped a situation or a piece of reasoning, and how wise, clear and keen his observations were. I remember, for example, one occasion when we three advisers had spent hours of thought over the contents of a telegram—the first appeal to Geneva in the Italo-Abyssinian dispute—revising and revising contents and phrasing. As soon as the text of it had been read aloud and translated, the Emperor made two

¹ Belaten-Guéta=learned gentleman.

corrections which we all had to admit were justified, and of great importance.

The time and place for these conferences varied considerably. They were held at any hour from early morning until late at night. Sometimes the Emperor would receive us in one of the many pavilions at the Great Gibi, sometimes in one at the Little Gibi, or else in the new palace which was built on the occasion of the visit of the Swedish Crown Prince and Princess. During the dry season the Emperor most often sat in a turret-like pavilion at the Great Gibi, which commands a fine view of the city and the surrounding hills. Here he would sit by the window with a big naval telescope beside him on the sill, and survey the town and the approaches to the Gibi.

When purely military matters were concerned I was ordered to present myself alone. The conversation was then held in French, and less formally. Like most Abyssinians, the Emperor liked to express himself in metaphor. I remember, for instance, that on one occasion when I had proposed a perhaps rather drastic measure, the Emperor replied, 'Do not forget that the hand of steel should wear a velvet glove'. At another time when I had expressed doubt as to the ability of some chief to carry out a certain order, the Emperor answered, 'The horse will take the fence his rider has heart for'.¹

¹ A journalist who asked the Emperor what he thought of Mussolini's bombastic speeches received the answer:

In this connection it may be mentioned that I held no military command, and had no authority to intervene directly in army matters. The military questions on which the Emperor consulted me were those of general defence, disposition of troops, training, organisation, equipment, technical experiments and the obtaining of arms, etc. When he had noted my verbal or written statement, he gave the necessary orders to the Minister for War, or other appropriate authority. I had never to superintend the carrying out of any imperial commands.

Court matters claimed much of my time during the first few months in Abyssinia. The Emperor wished his court to be run on European lines and we had many long conversations on the subject. Among other things, I received orders in July 1934 to design livery and uniforms for all the palace staff: valets, footmen, huntsmen, chauffeurs, coachmen and others. The execution of these designs was characteristic of the Emperor. Three days before his Majesty's birthday I handed in my suggestions, and on the morning of the birthday everyone was wearing the new clothes. Shops had

'Our great ancestor, King Solomon, says: "The wise man turns his tongue seven times in his mouth before speaking". We think that this proverb should be noted by statesmen of to-day.'

To a question concerning the possibilities of defence against troops so modernly equipped as the Italians, the reply was:

'The Bible tells us that David with a stone and a simple sling defeated Goliath with his copper armour and helmet, his lance, sword and shield.'

been ransacked for materials, and all the tailors, hatters and shoemakers in the town had been at work for three days and three nights—with the above result.

The Emperor, who is a tireless worker, did not spare his underlings; yet he was very considerate. Often, for instance, when we had been in consultation with him late in the evening, or at night, he would clap his hands and give the hastening servants orders to serve refreshments. Tables laden with dishes of caviare sandwiches, cakes, fruit, sweets and bottles of wine were brought in, and we were invited to help ourselves. The Emperor contented himself, as a rule, with an orange, or some other fruit. One day he noticed from the window of his pavilion that his advisers found difficulty in getting their cars up the steep roads leading to the Great Gobi. These roads were very rough and stony, and hard on motors. There was, indeed, an asphalt drive leading through the main gates, but this might only be used by the Emperor himself, and the foreign delegates. His Majesty now gave orders that in future our cars should be allowed to pass through these gates, and instructed us to say '*Amhakari*' (advisers) to the sentries, by way of password.

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To return to the daily routine: at noon my car stood once more outside the Foreign Office, and I drove home to lunch. Some hours later I would

return—this time usually on horseback—either to the office or to some conference at one of the ministries: that of Finance, Home Affairs, Education or Transport. These conferences, which dealt with the most varied questions, were frequent and took up a great deal of time. The minister in question sat as chairman, and the members of the conference were the foreign advisers, one or more of the other ministers and experts summoned for the occasion. Debates were often long drawn out, and not always strictly to the point. The conclusion finally reached was summed up in a written report, which was signed by members of the conference, and submitted to the Emperor for his approval.

At about six I would return home, if no urgent business awaited me and if I was not due for a consultation with the Emperor, when my return was often delayed until late at night. After dinner, which was served by the first boy with the help of the chauffeur, I would read or write for an hour, and was then glad to get to bed.

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At the beginning of my stay in Addis Ababa I took an active part in the social life of the Swedish colony and the foreign legations. Intercourse between foreigners and Abyssinians was rare. The Foreign Minister did indeed give dinners or lunches now and then for arriving or departing diplomats, at one or other of the hotels, but

natives and foreigners had no other social life in common, if one excepts the court banquets. The Emperor exercised great hospitality. Besides the regular banquets on his birthday and on the anniversary of his coronation, he quite often gave *dîners intimes*, where the number of guests amounted to thirty at most and where the atmosphere was less stiff and formal than at official receptions.

In the Swedish colony Dr. Hanner's house was the chief meeting-place, though other houses also, such as Dr. Nyström's, Mr. Hammar's and those of the missionaries, lived up to the Swedish tradition of hospitality, and I remember with gratitude and happiness all the kindness I met with in these places.

The foreign Powers represented at the imperial court—the United States of America, Belgium, Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany—all, with the exception of America, had their own legations, beautifully situated in large parks or gardens on the slopes of the Entotto Mountains, to the east of the town. The American legation rented a house in a good position in the town itself. Among the members of the Diplomatic Corps there was an active social life in which I at first joined. The ever-increasing work, however, and the oppressive climate made it necessary for me to abstain from society in the form of lunches and dinners, and from then onwards I took part only in official receptions at court, or on some other particularly important occasion.

A form of society gathering which was very popular among the foreigners in Addis Ababa was the race-meetings held at the Imperial Club, and the lunches then given. This club, which was founded about thirty years ago and is under the Emperor's patronage, possesses a racecourse and club-house on the north-eastern edge of the town. There would be four or five meetings during the dry season, which the Emperor attended, afterwards honouring with his presence the lunch given in the club-house. Amateurs as well as jockeys rode in the races, on Abyssinian or Arab horses, and participation in this as in the betting (totalisator system) was usually very keen.

The racecourse, which is beautifully situated, surrounded by woods and blue mountain ranges, presented on race-days a brilliant scene. In the royal box sat the Emperor attended by the household and other high officials in gorgeous dress. In the members' enclosure, diplomats and other foreigners passed to and fro. The ladies' dresses, the uniforms of officers and the colourful shirts of the jockeys glowed in the sunlight. On the other side of the course, opposite the royal stand, was the Guard's band, which entertained the public between the events, and all the way round stood a dense throng which followed the proceedings with lively interest and much expert knowledge. When, as often happened, the imperial colours—red, green and yellow—were first past the post, the enthusiasm was intense.

VIII

GOOD NEIGHBOURS, AND OTHER MATTERS

My house in Addis Ababa was situated in the middle of the town, at the junction of a side street leading from the Great and Little Gibi Avenue, with the main thoroughfare of the city, the Rue Makonnen. From my windows I had an excellent view of the traffic which poured past in an unbroken stream from morning till sunset, and also of the more intimate life of the surrounding *toukol* enclosures. Below I give a few short notes of some of the things I saw, which may perhaps help the reader to gain some idea of certain Abyssinian customs.

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Along the street, among hooting cars, bleating flocks of sheep, sedately advancing camels and half-running pedestrians, comes a grand lady (a *woizero*), riding slowly on her richly caparisoned grey mule. She wears the traditional white dress, tightly pleated at the waist and very full below. The bodice is in one piece with the neck cut low in front.

The *shamma* is drawn up over her face so that

only her dark eyes can be seen. A short, pale grey cape is thrown over her shoulders, and on her head she wears a broad, shady felt hat.

The mule's bridle and harness are adorned with silver and glittering stones. The reins are thin leather thongs twisted with silver threads. Over the saddle, which has a four-inch pommel front and back, lies a red saddle-cloth embroidered with gold and silver.

On either side of the mule walks a servant, ready to support their mistress in case of need. A couple of servant-girls run ahead, and behind march about ten men armed with rifles.

From the opposite direction a man comes riding, and he also is attended by a large number of servants, some walking ahead and the rest following the magnificently harnessed, coal-black mule. The rider is dressed in narrow white trousers, a long white shirt-like coat with a stand-up collar, and the inevitable white mantle, the *shamma*. Over his shoulders is a black cloak cut to a tapering tube on the left shoulder, to accommodate the barrel of his rifle, slung across his back beneath it. Round his waist he wears a red velvet cartridge-belt.

They meet just by my door. Both stop, take off their hats, and bow deeply in the saddle. At a sign from the *woizero* her servants run forward, form a ring round her and remove their *shammas*, which they hold up in outstretched hands so as to hide her completely from the eyes of passers-by while she is lifted from the saddle. When she has

rearranged her clothes the *shammas* are lowered, and the servants draw back.

Meanwhile the man has dismounted on the off side of his mule, and he and the lady now approach one another, hat in hand. Having arrived to within three or four paces of one another, they stop and bow deeply, several times. They then take the remaining few steps, and the lady kisses the man first on the right and then on the left cheek, a ceremony which is repeated by him. A conversation begins which lasts a few minutes; then the kissing is repeated, and after many more bows they return to their steeds. The man mounts his on the off side, while round the *woizero's* mule her servants make a ring with their *shammas* once more as their mistress is lifted into the saddle. With bared heads and renewed deep bows the parties pass each other, and proceed on their separate ways.

.

There is often a great to-do at my neighbour's over the way. He is a magistrate, and his yard is the law court. There the disputes and quarrels of the quarter are settled. As a rule there are no serious cases. They concern, perhaps, a few *besas* which one has swindled the other out of, or some object 'lost' in one house which has turned up in another. Yet to see and hear the parties stating their case, one could believe oneself in some parliament where an important question of state was to be decided. The Abyssinian is a born speaker, and

neglects no opportunity of exercising this talent. A lawsuit is a heaven-sent opening and entails as a rule a large and appreciative audience. Now threatening and gesticulating, now hoarsely whispering with shrugged shoulders, now tearfully, he tells of his vanished farthing, and points a menacing, trembling finger towards the accused.

The judge, sitting in the midst of a circle of spectators, having listened to this eloquence with a grave and thoughtful mien, now invites the accused to reply. Like a released spring he leaps up, and with raised hands calls heaven to witness his innocence, then falls on one knee, rises, stands on tiptoe, drops back on his heels, shakes his fist under the nose of his adversary and approaches the judge with clasped hands, while all the time an unceasing stream of words pours from his lips. Then it is once more the turn of the first, and in this way the duel of words continues for hour after hour, until the judge finally pronounces verdict on the two utterly exhausted parties, and, whichever way the case has gone, there is always a coin for the servant of justice.

Such a magistrate is appointed to each quarter of the town by the burgomaster (the *kantiba*), except for those districts which belong to the Church, where the ecclesiastical authorities enforce the law. These magistrates naturally lack all legal training, and give judgment according to no written law but are backed by tradition only and by common sense.

In the case of more serious crimes, where the police must intervene, the case is heard at the municipal court, or, if a foreigner is involved, at the special court mentioned in Chapter XI.

Abyssinian punishments were until recently very severe. Capital punishment by hanging, the cutting off of a hand for theft, flogging with a hippopotamus-hide whip and similar penal measures were common, but have now been put a stop to by the present Emperor. However, for him who takes another's life by murder or manslaughter, Moses' law—an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth—still obtains. The relatives of the dead man may claim the killer's life, unless they prefer to let him atone for his deed by the forfeit of a sum of money, but the death sentence must always be referred to or pronounced by the Emperor.

Execution is now always by shooting. In Addis Ababa this takes place in a building situated in the north-western end of the town. At one end of this building is a wooden framework, to which the culprit is strapped. At the opposite end three rifles are fixed in rests in such a way as to aim at the prisoner's heart. If the prisoner is convicted of murder or manslaughter, as distinct from sheer accidental killing, the victim's relatives have the right, if they wish, to fire the shots.

Here a curious incident may be related concerning one such execution. A man guilty of manslaughter was fastened to the frame, and the two first shots were fired. He fell forward and remained

hanging in the straps with the result that the third and last bullet did not strike his chest but grazed the left side of the scalp, entered the body at the left collar-bone and came out through the left shoulder-blade. The dead man, as they believed him, was released from the frame and handed over to his waiting relatives. On the way to the burial-ground they fancied they saw signs of life in him, and decided to hurry him to the Bethsaida Hospital. Most fortunately Dr. Hanner was at hand and performed an immediate operation. During this it was revealed that the two first shots had been fired at the moment of the heart's contraction, so that they passed close by the wall of the heart without damaging it. The shoulder wound was comparatively slight. After six weeks in hospital the man was well on the way to recovery, and a decision had to be made as to the course to take when he was well. As his nerves were naturally seriously affected, and he suffered much from uncertainty as to his fate, Dr. Hanner enquired directly of the Emperor what was to be done. The Emperor declared that the man had suffered his punishment, and that having survived it he should suffer no further. When the culprit heard this he answered that, fortunate though he was in receiving mercy at the hands of the Emperor, he was convinced that the relatives of the man he had killed would pursue him. A few days before he was due to be discharged from the hospital he disappeared, leaving no trace. One evening, some months later, he reappeared at the

hospital. He had been in hiding in the country, and only came back now to express his gratitude to the doctor. Having fulfilled this duty he vanished once more, and since then no more has been heard of him.

As has been mentioned, a man guilty of murder or manslaughter can, if the dead man's family agree, buy himself free by the payment of a sum which is fixed according to the circumstances of both parties. Often the criminal is given a certain time in which to find the money, and is allowed out on bail during that time to enable him to raise it. One day I received the visit of a gentleman who, bowing deeply, handed me an ornamentally printed, garland-bedecked document, expressing meanwhile the hope that I, as his honoured neighbour, would present a small contribution towards the sum he was unfortunately obliged to raise. As I very much wanted to gain possession of this highly original paper, I gave the man a dollar. He then carefully enquired my name and rank, and having entered them in a space provided on the paper he handed this to me, bowing deeply and uttering elegantly expressed thanks, and we parted with mutual esteem. I learned afterwards that this fellow had fractured the skull of a companion in a drinking-bout, and was sentenced to pay a hundred dollars. He was incidentally a doorkeeper—at the special court!

To be a convict in Abyssinia may be a serious matter. The State affords prisoners house-room

but no food. If the prisoner has no resources of his own, or relatives who can and will help him, he must starve to death. To the Abyssinian mind it is right and natural that the community should refuse to support those who break its laws. The jails, until quite recently, were dark, cramped and unhealthy. Here also, however, the present Emperor has brought in reforms, and in the middle of September 1935 a new prison was opened in Addis Ababa, built on modern principles with light, roomy cells, sanitation and big exercise yards, etc.

.

I am sitting working at my writing-table by the open window. In the garden, where a few weeks ago all was bare and parched, the flowers are at their most brilliant now that the rains have begun. There are the velvet-brown dahlias, the brick-red salvia; irises open out their sea-blue scrolls, nasturtiums bloom golden-red, and roses hang in overwhelming masses. The medlar trees have new light green shoots and the soft breeze rustles with a dry sound in the thickening foliage of the eucalyptus. On the lawn squats Ahmed, the garden-boy, cutting the fresh, strong grass for the first time this year. The good Ahmed is not handsome. He is short and tubby, he has bow legs and long arms, his nose is flat and his lips are thick. His Galla blood must have a strong dash of the negro in it.

I return to my work, but soon my attention is distracted from it again by something white, which

flaps. Ahmed, with grave demeanour, is folding up his *shamma*. He has put down his sickle and spreads his bit of stuff prudently on the grass. Now with a glance at the sun he pulls the edge into line with some particular direction. Next he takes the watering-can which is standing on the path and pours water over his hands; then falls upon his knees, stretches up both arms and bows down several times so low that his forehead touches the white cloth. Ahmed is a Mahomedan, and it is the hour of prayer. I see his lips moving, but cannot catch the words. With his face towards Mecca he calls upon Allah and the Prophet.

A feeling of wonderment comes over me. What power this religion has! Just as Ahmed a moment ago laid down his sickle, so when the hour is come the brass-worker in Baghdad throws down his hammer and his graver, the water-carrier in Fez lowers his skins, the camel-rider in Timbuctoo slips from the saddle, and the bedouin reins in his galloping beast—and all pray with their faces towards Mecca.

With their faces towards Mecca. . . . I emerge from my musings and am seized with a desire to verify this. Is Ahmed's face really turned in the right direction? I forget the work I have begun, and eagerly take out my compass and my English ordnance-survey map. I orient it, draw a pencil-line between Addis Ababa and the city of the Prophet, and compare it with the line of Ahmed's *shamma*. The two lines are identical within a few degrees. Yet Ahmed has no compass, he has surely

never seen a map, and could quite certainly never read it if he did see it. How can he know in which direction the holy city lies? I ask, but find no answer.

.

In the distance is heard the blast of horns, and soon afterwards a wedding procession turns into the Rue Makonnen. At the head of it walk two men who make an appalling noise with long copper horns. They are followed by the 'best men' on mules and on foot. Then come the bride and bridegroom. She has her *shamma* drawn right up over her head so that her face is hidden. He wears the usual white dress with a light-blue cape. Behind them come bridesmaids and relatives. Both people and mules are richly decked with flowers. The women express their joy by hand-clapping and cries of 'Eli'. These cries, which are uttered in a high treble, follow quickly one after another: 'Elielieli—'. 'Eli', it seems, is the same word as Alleluia. The bridal procession is on the way from the bride's home to the bridegroom's.

In Abyssinia a girl is of marriageable age from twelve to fourteen. A maiden of sixteen or seventeen is considered to be on the shelf. During the year immediately preceding a girl's marriage she may not go out of doors while the sun is up. Only after sunset is she let out of the *toukol* into the fresh air. This is so that her complexion shall not be exposed to the rays of the sun; for the fairer the

bride's skin the lovelier and more desirable she is considered. A short time before her wedding, in order to bleach her skin to the uttermost, the girl has to sit in the smoke of burning wood until her skin peels off and another, lighter layer appears.

Three days before the wedding the women friends of the bride assemble at her parents' home, and spend these three days and nights in unceasing song and hand-clapping. It is particularly important that the hand-clapping should not for an instant leave off. It must continue day and night, and the girls are therefore divided into shifts and take turns with the work.

There are three kinds of marriage in Abyssinia. The first and simplest form consists in the bridegroom fetching the bride from her parents' home, after the three days of preparation described, and taking her, followed by best men and bridesmaids, to his house, where a formal meal is eaten.

The second form is like the first except that the bridal pair are blessed by priests before leaving the bride's home. In both kinds divorce can be obtained without difficulty, but the man is bound to give half of all his possessions to his divorced wife. There are very many women in Abyssinia who have been married and divorced several times. Divorce is in no way held to lessen their worth. On the contrary, a woman who has been divorced several times, and each time received half the husband's goods, becomes increasingly desirable in the marriage market.

In the third form of marriage the two contract-

ing parties follow up the three days of preparation by taking the Sacrament together—*kedes kurba*—in church. For this they wear golden mantles and crowns, which belong to the Church. Such a marriage is indissoluble.

.

To-day Ababa Betj (Little Flower), the first boy's wife, has had a son. For several days all preparations had been made in their *toukol*, and the women neighbours were in readiness. In one corner of the only room in the *toukol* a bed of dried, crumbled cow-dung had been prepared. A fire burned continuously in the middle of the floor, and as this *toukol*, like all others, lacked a chimney, the smoke filled the room and trickled out through the thatch, the door and the cracks of the windows. Beside the fire stood a great cauldron of baked clay filled with water.

When Ababa Betj felt her hour approaching the neighbours were summoned and she was placed crouching on the bed of dung, supported under the arms by two women. As soon as the boy was born one of the women severed the navel-string with her nails close up to the child's body in such a way that there was no bleeding. Then to facilitate the expulsion of the afterbirth, the navel-string was tied to Ababa Betj's big toe, and she was told to move her foot gently. When the afterbirth had come, the mother was lifted carefully into her own bed, where she must lie until the fourth day.

When the child had been washed and attended to, it was laid to its mother's breast, naked as it came into the world. The bed of cow-dung was cleared away and the room tidied.

An Abyssinian woman is regarded as unclean after child-bearing until she has undergone a special purification—by smoke. A hole is dug in the earthen floor of the *toukol*, and upon either side of this is placed a flat stone. The hole is then filled with glowing charcoal upon which fresh eucalyptus boughs and leaves are laid. The mother squats over the fire, with a foot on each of the flat stones, and must remain in this position, enveloped in smoke, for a couple of hours. This smoke must possess strong disinfecting qualities, as puerperal infection is extremely rare. After the smoking the woman is considered purified, and returns to her daily tasks.

On the eighth day after its birth the child is circumcised, and on the fourteenth day if a boy and the eighteenth if a girl it is christened, usually in church. The baby receives at baptism one or more saints' names, and another by which it is generally known. This last name is not as a rule ready-made, as it were, but is invented by the parents to express their feelings or hopes. Such names for instance as the First-Born, the Most Beloved, Love Pledge, Ray of the Sun, the Bold, the Faithful Servant, and so on.

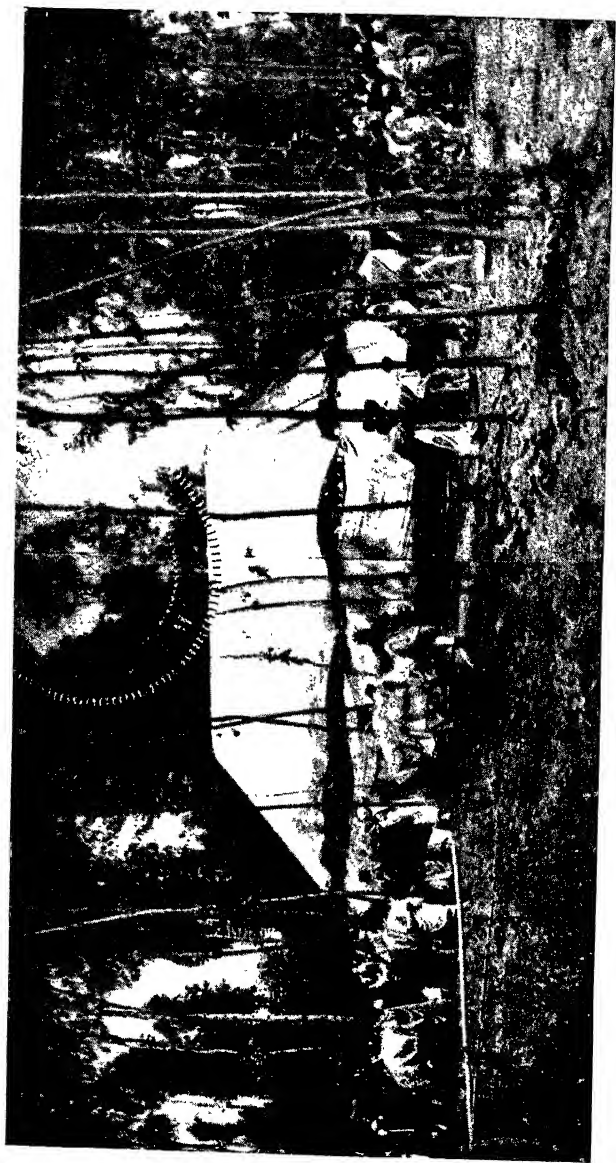
Abyssinians as a race are very fond of children, and treat them well and tenderly. Family customs



THE MEN WALKED FIRST IN THE FUNERAL PROCESSION



—AND THE WOMEN FOLLOWED



AFTER THE FUNERAL THE ASSEMBLY PARTOOK OF A MEAL
GIVEN BY THE BEREAVED FAMILY, IN A TENT PITCHED IN THEIR GARDEN

are patriarchal, and the clan stands or falls together. It is natural that in this ancient feudal state high birth played, and to a certain extent still plays, a great part.

.

Life and death meet! Some days after Ababa Betj's delivery I was awakened at sunrise by wild shrieks and cries of woe. I rose and opened my shutters. In the garden adjoining mine a strange scene was in progress. During the night, as I afterwards found out, a man had died in the neighbouring *toukol*. The body now lay out in the open on a bier of boughs, covered with a pale blue piece of stuff woven with pink flowers. Round it there heaved an excited crowd of people. The men moved with sagging step, tore their hair and raised full-throated howls, while tears streamed in rivers down their cheeks. The women had bared the upper part of their bodies, and struck themselves ceaselessly on their naked breasts, uttering long-drawn-out shrieks and wails meanwhile. In the midst of this din and confusion the garments of the deceased flew hither and thither in the air, thrown from one mourner to another. When this scene of woe had continued for some time, the bier was raised on the shoulders of four men, and the mob formed itself into a procession which, amid continued shrieks and lamentations, disappeared round the corner of the street.

In Abyssinia burial takes place immediately after

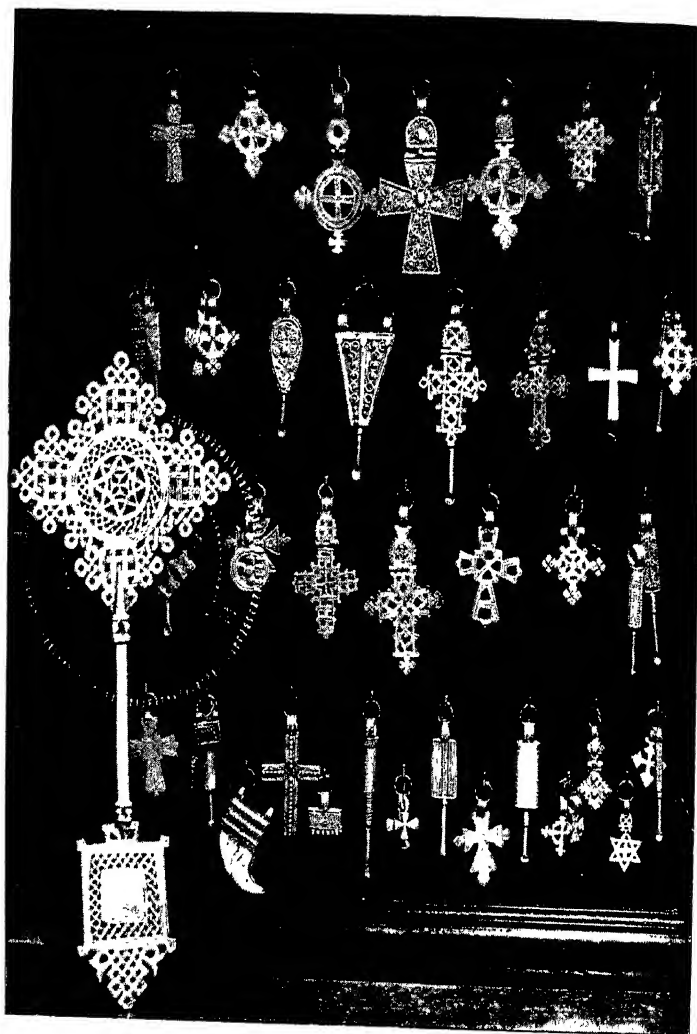
death. There is, indeed, reason to suspect that in many cases the dying person is carried to the burial-ground before he has given up the ghost. In the churchyard the same scenes are enacted as the one I witnessed, and after the priests have said the requiem mass the dead man is laid, usually without a coffin, in the grave, which is filled in by the male mourners. The funeral procession then returns to the house of the bereaved family, where a copious meal is eaten.

.

Outside my gate two men are standing and gesticulating up at the windows to attract attention. I recognise them. They are pedlars who come fairly regularly to offer their wares: products of Abyssinian craftsmen, notably the silversmith; but also earthenware vessels, painted statuettes, basket-work, rugs and so on. I clap my hands and order the hurrying boy to ask what they have to offer to-day. After a time the boy returns with his hands full of crosses and ear-picks of silver, silver amulets, leatherwork, and lions' claws set in silver, etc. At the beginning of my stay in Abyssinia I bought quite indiscriminately. Gradually, however, I learned to sift the wheat from the chaff; for fakes creep in, wrought by Greeks or Armenians from cheap materials. The Abyssinian workman obtains his material chiefly by melting down or hammering out Maria-Theresa dollars, which are as nearly as possible pure silver. His products con-



A MULE IN GORGEOUS TRAPPINGS

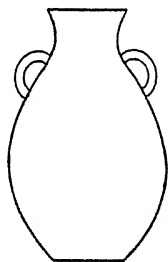


EXAMPLES OF ABYSSINIAN SILVERSMITHS' WORK

On the left a cross borne by the priest during Mass.
 The rest are women's ornaments

sist principally either of little crosses which Abyssinian women wear round their necks on a string, or large ones, which the priests carry in their hands. The shape and ornamentation of these crosses vary greatly according to the province they come from, and according also to what symbols are reproduced upon them. (Examples of different types of crosses are given in the illustration.) Besides these there is a rich choice of bracelets, rings, amulets and similar things, in the shape and ornamentation of which Arabian influence can often be traced.

Among earthenware goods the *goumba* is most



noticeable: a fat jar narrowing towards the top and widening again at the lip. They vary in height from four inches to forty. There are also bowls of various widths and depths, big flat dishes for drying the red pepper used in all Abyssinian cooking, jugs and bottles with long necks, etc. These earthenware products are usually handsome and well proportioned, and show good and restrained taste. Ornamentation is either lacking or else slight and discreet.

Painting and sculpture are undeveloped in

Abyssinia. Sculptors, indeed, are noticeable by their absence. There are a few painters who have studied in Europe, and whose work consequently is more European than Abyssinian. Such an artist is Agnegnehu Enguida, for instance, who studied in France, and who is now at work on wall-paintings depicting scenes from Abyssinian history, in the new parliament house in Addis Ababa. A work of his is reproduced in this book.

Though artists are lacking, this does not mean that the Abyssinian takes no interest in portraying what he sees or feels. On the contrary he enjoys handling a brush, but the results are more or less clumsy. Often they are reminiscent of our old folk-paintings of Dalarna, and like them show an instinct for decorative grouping, although the method of presenting the subject is very much that of a child.

Abyssinian architecture is also at a low level. The round form of building, with the pointed, funnel-shaped roof, is the most common. It is everywhere: churches, public buildings, houses and sheds—all have this turret-like shape. To the Abyssinian the right angle is a mystery, and appears only in buildings of European pattern.

.

At the street corners and in all the gardens round bonfires are blazing. Crowds bearing torches surge along the streets with dance and song. It is New Year's Eve, and great are the rejoicings.



‘YOUNG ABYSSINIAN WOMAN’

A painting by Agnegnehu Enguida



A NATIVE PAINTING

The Emperor gives his people a constitution

The songs, which are usually improvised and consist of a few words or phrases constantly repeated, have a very limited range of notes. A leader will sing the words in time to the dance or march, and the rest join in with one strongly emphasised word, as in the following example:

Leader: 'Ingera, ingera, ingera!'

Chorus: 'Wuot!'

Leader: 'Ingera, ingera, ingera!'

Chorus: 'Wuot!'

—and so on.

My boys have been given money to buy a sheep, which is now being roasted over an open fire in the back-garden. Their crouching figures grouped round the blaze throw long shadows on the stable wall. The rain has stopped, and the evening is calm and mild. New Year's Eve, indeed, but according to our calendar the date is September 11th.

The story goes that the Abyssinian calendar is founded on the result arrived at in the calculations of the Egyptian monk Ponodorus. This man, who lived in the fifth century, placed Christ's birth eight years later than the period assumed by us. Thus our year 1936 is to Abyssinians 1928, the latter half of it being 1929. This reckoning, which was adopted by Christians in Syria, was probably brought thence to Abyssinia.

The Abyssinian year is divided into twelve months of thirty days each, and one month of five,

or in leap year six, days. The year begins on the first of Maskaram, corresponding to our September 11th in ordinary years; September 12th in leap years. The Abyssinian leap year falls the year before ours. The table given below shows the names of the

| ABYSSINIAN CALENDAR | | | GREGORIAN CALENDAR | |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Year | Month | No. of Days | Year | Month |
| 1927 ¹ | Maskaram | 30 | 1934 | Sept. 11th till Oct. 10th |
| | Tekempt | " | | Oct. 11th " Nov. 9th |
| | Heidar | " | 1935 | Nov. 10th " Dec. 9th |
| | Tesas | " | | Dec. 10th " Jan. 8th |
| | Tirr | " | | Jan. 9th " Feb. 7th |
| | Yekatit | " | | Feb. 8th " March 9th |
| | Megabit | " | | March 10th " April 8th |
| | Mezeja | " | | April 9th " May 8th |
| | Gimbot | " | | May 9th " June 7th |
| | Sene | " | | June 8th " July 7th |
| | Hemle | " | | July 8th " Aug. 6th |
| | Nehesse | " | | Aug. 7th " Sept. 5th |
| | Quegme | 6 | | Sept. 6th " Sept. 11th |
| 1928 | Maskaram | 30 | 1936 ¹ | Sept. 11th " Oct. 10th |
| | Tekempt | " | | Oct. 11th " Nov. 9th |
| | Heidar | " | | Nov. 9th " Dec. 9th |
| | Tesas | " | | Dec. 11th " Jan. 9th |
| | Tirr | " | | Jan. 10th " Feb. 8th |
| | Yekatit | " | | Feb. 9th " March 9th |
| | Megabit, etc. | " | | March 10th " April 8th |

months and the corresponding periods in the Gregorian Calendar.

The Abyssinian day is divided thus: day is reckoned from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. and night from 6 P.M. to 6 A.M. Within each of these periods the hours are numbered from one to twelve; thus 7 A.M. or P.M. is the first hour of the day or night respectively, and 8 A.M. or P.M. the second. 6 A.M. or P.M. is the twelfth hour of the day or night, so

¹ Leap year.

that 8.30 would be given as 'the second hour and a half' (*hullat tjas tukel*).

.

When I raise my eyes from the changing pictures in the street and from the kaleidoscope of my neighbours' dwellings, I have from my windows a view of enchanting beauty. Above the tops of the eucalyptus trees stretches the long blue range, with a break in the south, in the centre of which the holy mountain of Sukala raises its huge, flat-topped cone. In the early morning this extinct volcano is enveloped in drifting cloud, but when the sun scatters the mists it seems to draw nearer, and in the crystal-clear air the ridges and folds of stony lava streams stand out plainly, like furrows on an aged cheek. As the sun sinks in the west the mountain-wall turns violet and the edge of the crater takes on a rosy colour until, at the instant when the sun dips below the horizon, it brightens to a blaze. If the air is really clear one can distinguish some white dots on the summit. These are buildings belonging to the monastery of St. John.

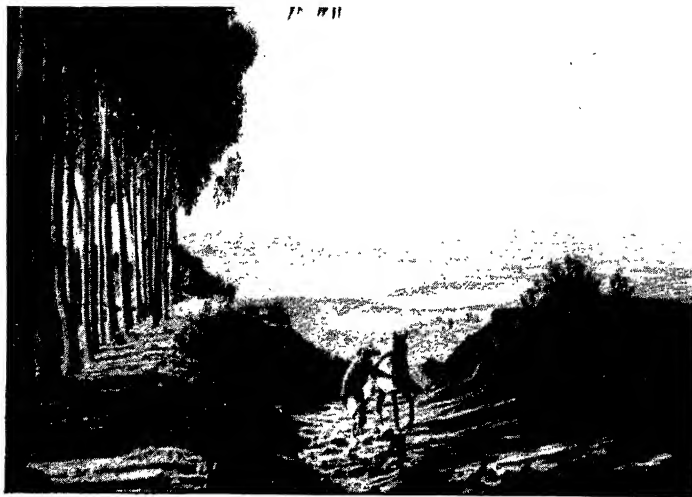
More than a hundred years ago, so the story runs, a vessel was wrecked on the Somali coast, and the only surviving member of the crew, a sailor from Lübeck, wandered into the interior. Since the Portuguese invasion in the sixteenth century this ground had been untrodden by any white man's foot. The sailor's Christian name was Johan; his surname no one knows. He covered

hundreds of miles in his wanderings, and was received everywhere with wonder and awe by the natives. Then one day he reached the Sukala mountain, and climbed up its steep side to gain a view of the surrounding country. On reaching the top he found in the old crater a crystal-clear lake, whose banks were fresh and green. At his feet lay undulating tablelands, bounded on all sides by jagged mountain ranges. Enchanted by the overwhelming beauty of the spot and weary of wandering, he decided to remain. He built himself a hut on the shores of the lake, and soon the news spread far and wide that a man whose skin had no colour had made his home on the summit of Sukala. People flocked to him from afar for advice and help in their troubles, and to be cured of illness and wounds. The white man fulfilled their hopes. He comforted the sad, he gave wise counsel, he bound up the wounded and tended the sick. He made himself respected and beloved by all, and when he closed his eyes for the last time he was mourned by all the country round. To honour the hermit's memory a monastery was built on the spot where his hut had stood; to-day this monastery is still one of the greatest in the land, and St. John's Day is celebrated as one of the major Church festivals.

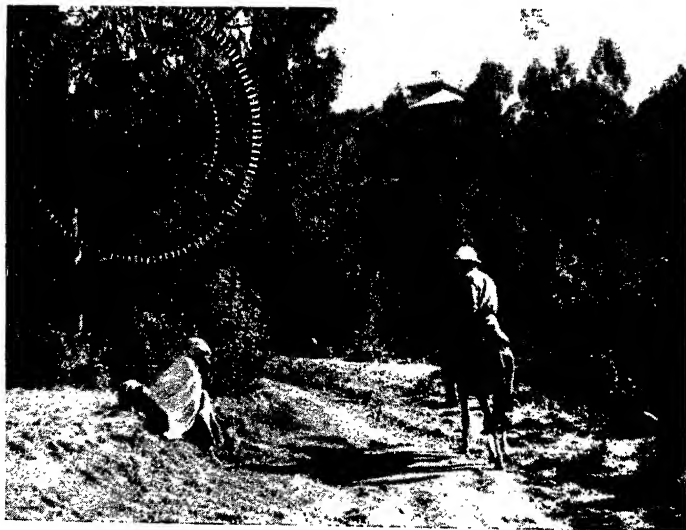
A strange destiny! A poor, wind-driven sailor comes to port far inland, in Africa, and there by his life and works raises for himself a memorial which stands long after many 'great' men's anniversaries have sunk into oblivion.



FROM THE SLOPES OF THE ENTOTTO MOUNTAIN



VIEW FROM THE SUMMIT OF THE ENTOTTO MOUNTAIN



IN THE ENTOTTO DISTRICT

IX

SWEDES IN ABYSSINIA

To give a survey of Swedish activities in Abyssinia is at first to tell the story of the Swedish East African Mission; for it was the Swedish missionaries who first came into contact with the African Empire, and their unselfish philanthropic work which founded a respect for Sweden and things Swedish in this part of the world.

In the year 1865 the Swedish Evangelical Mission decided to embark on missionary work among the heathen Galla races, which inhabited the country south of the Abyssinia of those days. On March 15th, 1866, after a long and troublesome journey, three missionaries, Lange, Kjellberg and Carlsson, landed at Massawa on the Red Sea, in what is now the Italian colony of Eritrea. The territory round and to the west of Massawa was at that time a No-man's-land. Both Egypt and Abyssinia claimed supremacy here, and both, under pretext of collecting taxes, made many raids into this unhappy district.

The three Swedish missionaries intended to try and make their way to the Galla country through Abyssinia. They managed to reach Kunama, a

province about 120 miles west of Massawa, but to penetrate Abyssinia—at that time the scene of serious unrest—proved impossible. The Swedes, therefore, remained in Kunama and began work, while waiting to find another more practicable route into Galla territory. For four years those Swedes, whose number during that time was increased to fifteen, carried on their self-sacrificing, exacting and dangerous work. Of the fifteen, seven fell at their post, five dying of illnesses due to the climate and two being murdered by natives. The remainder, owing to conflicts between Abyssinians and Egyptians and the hostile attitude of both parties towards the mission, were obliged in 1870 to give up the struggle and go back to Massawa, where in time another mission station was established on a piece of land presented by General Gordon, at Monkullo, just outside the town.

Monkullo remained for many years the base from which the Swedish mission carried on its philanthropic work. News of this work was spread abroad by traders' caravans, and by other travellers, and from far and wide the sick, the wounded, the hungry and those seeking knowledge poured into the Swedish station to find refuge. Yet here also the missionaries long encountered dangers and difficulties. The tropical climate claimed many victims, and in 1876 another missionary, Lager, was murdered by robbers. Only when, in 1885, Italian troops occupied Massawa did conditions improve.

At about the same time as the Italians the

Swedish frigate *Vanadis* put into Massawa harbour, under Commander O. Lagerberg, with Prince Oscar on board. On representations made by the directors of the mission, King Oscar II had given orders that the frigate, which was returning from a world cruise, should touch at Massawa and offer assistance to the Swedes there. The worst danger was, indeed, over by the time the vessel arrived, but the visit was nevertheless of the greatest importance both as encouragement to the sorely tried missionaries and for the regularising of their position in relation to the Italian occupation authorities.

Throughout all this period, the original plan of pushing on into Galla country had by no means been abandoned. Indeed repeated attempts had been made. In the year 1881 an expedition started from Massawa under the leadership of the missionary Arrhenius, going first by boat to Suakin, a port on the Red Sea about 280 miles north of Massawa. From Suakin the party struck westward across the desert to Berber on the Nile, then along the river to Khartoum and up the Blue Nile to Famaka on the Abyssinian border. Here the expedition was forced to halt, and, after fruitless negotiation with the Abyssinian governor, to return to Khartoum, where Arrhenius succumbed to the fatigues of the journey, and the expedition was dissolved.

Some years later, in 1885, they were ready to embark on another attempt. Menelik II now ruled Shoa, and he, by the intercession of a German

missionary, had promised the Swedes a safe passage. This time they made their way from Monkullo via Aden to Zeila, a port on the Somali coast, and thence westward to the Abyssinian frontier which they crossed near the town of Ankober. Here, however, in spite of Menelik's promise, the expedition was stopped and forced to turn and work its way back under great privations, trials and dangers, through the desert lands to the coast.

In 1903 the Swedes tried yet again to press forward to that mirage-like goal, the Galla country; this time from the south, through what is now Italian Somaliland—and this time also in vain. It was found that the only possible way was by reaching Harar from Zeila, whence the other expedition had started, and then working westward. Permission was obtained to stay in Harar, and while waiting until the doors of the interior should be opened to them they began their mission work—work which continued until 1906.

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As early as 1904 a single missionary, Cederquist, exhausted and ill, succeeded in winning his way to the capital, where, in spite of the hostility to foreigners prevailing in the country, he obtained Menelik's permission to remain. Right up to his death in 1919 Cederquist worked steadily in Abyssinia, at first alone, and succeeded in winning the confidence, respect and admiration of the

Emperor and his people. Many natives who now hold high confidential posts received their first instruction from Cederquist, among them the present Minister for Foreign Affairs.

During these years, the first twenty of the present century, Abyssinia was the scene of great changes. In 1913 Emperor Menelik died and was succeeded by his daughter's son, Lij Yassu. As early as 1916, however, he was deposed and Menelik's daughter Zauditu proclaimed Empress, with Ras Tafari, the present Emperor Haile Selassie, as co-ruler. It was the dawn of a new era for Abyssinia and for Swedish mission work. Then, and later as Emperor, Haile Selassie showed the greatest goodwill towards the mission, and has always given it his support. There are now Evangelical Mission stations in Addis Ababa (a boys' school and a girls' school), in Nakamte (a hospital and a school) and in Nejo (a school). Then another mission, the 'Bibeltrogna Vänner', has two stations in Addis Ababa (a boys' school and a girls' school) and in Harar (hospital and school).

In the original mission field, the present Italian colony of Eritrea, work has, however, gone back by reason of Catholic influence. The mission station in Monkullo, from which the whole of the East African campaign was started, stands empty, and Swedish missionaries are no longer permitted to work in the Italian colonies.

When the Emperor Haile Selassie went to

Sweden in 1924, he was asked by a journalist why he had visited our distant country. He replied:

'The chief reason for my visit is my love for Sweden. Swedish missionaries have performed in my country a great and blessed work. They have founded schools and hospitals, they speak our language, and they, of all missionaries, have best known how to win the affection and trust of my people.'

A handsome testimonial. Any fellow-countryman who realises the hardships, trials, sacrifices, dangers and sufferings that have had to be endured cannot fail to be filled not only with admiration for the men and women who have followed the path of duty to the death if need be, but also with pride to belong to the land that bore them. One can breathe something of the spirit of the great period, the Caroline period, when studying the Swedish mission history of East Africa.

His appreciation of the selfless work of these missionaries, combined with the good impression gained on his visit to our country, kindled the Emperor's desire to secure Swedish doctors and nurses for the hospital which he founded in Addis Ababa on his return. In 1926 Dr. K. Hanner and the hospital sisters Miss Boström and Miss Hagman arrived at the Abyssinian capital. For eight years, assisted more recently by Dr. Nyström, a missionary's son born in Abyssinia, they have run the Imperial Hospital in the most praise-

worthy way and still further upheld the good name of Sweden. The original hospital soon proved too small and is at present being rebuilt and extended. Plans for the new hospital have been examined, and some drawn up, by the architect Dr. Birch-Lindgren, and when these are carried out Addis Ababa will own a hospital second to none of its kind.

The Emperor's experience of Swedes in hospital and mission work encouraged him to turn to Sweden for a political adviser. The choice fell upon Dr. J. Kolmodin, Counsellor to the legation, son of the warden of the mission—afterwards Professor Kolmodin—who twenty years earlier had worked with the East African missionaries. Dr. Kolmodin, who was really a philologist, had lived for a long time in Turkey. When he arrived at Addis Ababa in 1931 he did not feel a stranger there. He had already mastered the history and language of Abyssinia, and soon won universal and whole-hearted confidence. Unhappily his service in Abyssinia was not of long duration, for in the autumn of 1933 Kolmodin died of a stroke.

The Emperor, who felt his loss deeply, then made application for another Swede, this time as military as well as political adviser; a request which was acceded to by the Swedish Government in 1934.

In other fields also the Emperor has sought the help of Swedes. The new wireless station in Addis Ababa was managed from the beginning by a

Swedish engineer, Mr. Hammar, and at the cadet school Swedish officers have been chosen for director and instructors.

In this connection may be mentioned the contribution made by Professor Reenstierna, who spent part of 1935 in Addis Ababa. His successful treatment of lepers with serum aroused great admiration and helped to increase the respect for his country.

Sweden, therefore, has a welcome sound in Abyssinian ears, and it is to be hoped that the pioneer work carried out by Swedes in this African Empire will promote closer ties between the two nations in other spheres also. If this is to be, however, let us take care that what has already been won be not jeopardised by more or less irresponsible individuals who, trading on the Swedish name, carry on their work of exploitation. Examples are unfortunately not lacking. If Abyssinia is to be in the future a market for Swedish enterprise, honest, skilled and responsible men and firms must take the lead.

X

A CADET SCHOOL

ONLY a few weeks after my arrival in Addis Ababa, when I had had time to become *au fait* with conditions there, I found that one of the most important and necessary steps to be taken, from a military point of view, was the formation of a trained body of officers. Hitherto these officers—or perhaps more rightly chiefs—were chosen almost exclusively from considerations of birth, and lacked all training. It must be acknowledged, nevertheless, that these men, who have also judicial, administrative and other functions, know how to exercise authority, and possess by heritage and tradition an understanding of strategy and tactics which must astonish and impress the foreigner. The apparently loosely linked groups of men under the leadership of these captains also possess a remarkable instinct for organised warfare, and their skill is not only a tradition from days long past, but has shown itself in the most recent times.

When it is a question of training troops for modern warfare, however, and finding them leaders, the Abyssinian command does not possess the necessary knowledge or technical skill. For

this, very different instruction is needed from that which Abyssinian leaders have hitherto received. To give future officers the necessary grounding in the art of war, and to teach them to teach others, various training centres must be set up, and foremost among them a cadet school.

As soon as I had put these ideas before the Emperor, he gave me orders to plan the organisation of a native military college, on the understanding that students might as soon as possible be passed out by examination, and be at hand for the formation of new companies already planned.

In these circumstances it was necessary both to limit to essentials the number of subjects and their extent, and to bring instruction under way as soon as possible.

After careful consideration I decided to institute a sixteen-months' course: four months of preliminary work and weeding-out, and twelve months' real training. This, according to European ideas, is far too short, but was made necessary by the Emperor's order. The students were to be divided into three groups: infantry, artillery, and signalling and engineering. The language of instruction should be French, and the regulations those of the French Army, the reason being that French was taught in all the more advanced Abyssinian schools; thus instruction without an interpreter would be possible.

In engaging directors and staff for the school thus planned many forces came into play. I

suggested to the Emperor that they should be picked from the Swedish Army, the training of whose officers is of a very high standard. However, there had been a Belgian military commission in Abyssinia for many years, and it was now maintained that instructors also should be taken from Belgium. Efforts were made, too, by other interested parties, to put the Swedes out of the running. It was declared that the Swedish Army lacked experience of war, that Swedes would certainly have an insufficient command of French to teach in that language, that they were more expensive than others—this because I had proposed rates of pay exceeding those of other foreigners in similar positions—and so on. At an interview with the Emperor in August 1934, his Majesty put these arguments before me without reserve. I agreed that some of them were justified, but maintained that if the Swedish Government would place officers at our disposal, the Emperor would be served by conscientious, reliable and efficient men, ready to devote all their energies to achieving good results.

At the end of our conversation the Emperor ordered me to enquire of the Swedish authorities whether a captain and four subalterns might be placed at the service of the Abyssinian Government as principal and instructors of the cadet school, and also as consulting experts when need arose. The Swedish Government consented, and from among many candidates were chosen Captain Tamm of the Svea Life Guards as head of the college, and for

instructors Lieutenants Bouveng of the Norrbotten regiment, Heüman of the Göta Artillery, Thorburn of the Bohuslän Regiment, and Nyblom of the Engineers, all of whom had passed through either the Staff College or the Artillery and Engineers' colleges.

A question which presented great problems was the choice of quarters. As there was no time to build, some place had to be found which could be adapted for the purpose without extensive alteration. After many buildings within the town of Addis Ababa had been inspected and found unsuitable, the Emperor ordered me to make the journey to Guenet, a summer palace of his situated about thirty miles west of the capital, and find out whether the buildings there were suitable for the establishment of the college. I soon saw that a number of buildings in the neighbourhood of the palace, which had been erected as quarters for the guard when the Emperor was in residence, could be converted for use without much difficulty, and that the surrounding territory was ideal for military exercises. Then, since it was also an advantage to have the school at some distance from the capital, I eagerly advocated its establishment at Guenet, and the Emperor consented to this.

The word *Guenet* means paradise, and the place justifies its name. The palace itself, which was built by Emperor Menelik II, stands on a tree-grown hill, at the foot of which the college buildings are grouped. Round about is a plain of rather broken

ground, strewn with copses and threaded by streams, and bounded on the east and south by great mountains where lights and shades alter with every hour of the day. It is a landscape of grandeur and enchanting beauty.

While on this subject I cannot omit to relate an episode of this my first visit to Guenet as an example of the Emperor's kindness and consideration. While I was making my examination of the buildings, and calculating their capacity, etc., a servant came from the palace and announced that lunch was served. Having provided myself with a packet of sandwiches before leaving Addis Ababa, I was much astonished. However, I followed the man up to the palace, which was empty at that time, and found on entering the great dining-room a beautifully laid table at which I was invited to sit down. Waited on by a butler and two footmen I partook of a meal of six courses and three kinds of wine. Unknown to me the Emperor had ordered his steward to see that lunch was prepared for me at the palace on the day of my visit there. Early in the morning of the day on which I left Addis Ababa, a lorry with footmen, kitchen staff and provisions on board had set out for Guenet, where the meal was afterwards prepared. The same kindly thoughtfulness on the part of the Emperor was shown to the Swedish officers when they first visited the scene of their future activity.

Just before Christmas 1934 the Swedish officers arrived in Addis Ababa. From the outset they made

a good impression; an impression afterwards confirmed. It is no exaggeration to say that by their behaviour, their efficiency, their industry and devotion to duty they fulfilled high expectations and proved worthy representatives of Sweden and of the Swedish Army. At the beginning especially they had great difficulties to overcome—difficulties which affected not least the personal comfort and well-being of their families. With steadfast energy and endurance they overcame them, and it is to be hoped that they will continue to fulfil their important task to their own honour and the honour of the army which bred them.

On the arrival of the Swedish officers they and the principals of the higher schools in Addis Ababa co-operated in the work of selecting military candidates from among the pupils. The qualifications for entry were physical ability and certain standards of learning, among which a good knowledge of written and spoken French was compulsory. Students were not consulted as to their own wishes. The Emperor had commanded that candidates should be chosen, and there was no more to be said. No difficulty was found in raising a hundred, which was the required number. On the contrary, many had to be refused admission owing to lack of space and other reasons.

At the end of January 1935 the chosen boys assembled at Guenet, where the work of alteration was still going on. A caterer had been engaged, sleeping-quarters were set in order, uniforms were

made by tailors who had set up workshops on the spot, arms and other equipment kept arriving from the stores in Addis Ababa, and training was begun. About the once peaceful palace all was now bustle and movement. Five months after the decision had been taken to establish the school, this school was a reality.

The material proved good. It consisted of alert and intelligent young men of ages ranging from seventeen to twenty-one. With their innate military gifts and their interest in the country's defence, they embarked with the greatest energy, not to say enthusiasm, on the new work.

If it proved comparatively easy to arrange for the accommodation of the students, great difficulties were met with in providing adequate quarters for the officers, and when the families of these came over at the beginning of March 1935 the overcrowding was almost unendurable. Gradually, however, these difficulties also were overcome, and the officers now have dwellings of from three to six rooms each, with outhouses and gardens.

At the end of April 1935 the cadet school was officially inspected for the first time by the Emperor, who presented it with colours. The programme of inspection was extensive, and included manoeuvres as well as a demonstration of other subjects, practical and theoretical. The Emperor made a thorough tour of the quarters and was present at the midday meal. At the conclusion of the inspection the Emperor declared himself much pleased with the work

already done. Indeed, an impartial observer had to admit that, in spite of the many obstacles encountered, the students had covered an amazing amount of ground in a very short time. The results of this inspection bore witness to conscientious and intensive work, and it is to be hoped and believed that the school under its Swedish direction will fulfil the expectations of the Abyssinians.

After the inspection the Emperor gave a lunch at the palace for all those who had been present and for the Swedish officers and their wives. When the meal was over he sent for the officers' children and gave each of them a gold coin with his head engraved upon it.

XI

THE GREAT POWERS

ABYSSINIA, the only remaining independent state in Africa, is surrounded on all sides by the possessions of great European Powers.

These possessions, in themselves of limited economic value, are all more or less dependent on Abyssinia for their existence. In the west lies the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, the cultivation of which is made possible only through the irrigation afforded by the Blue Nile, which rises in Lake Tsana. In the east lies French Somaliland, a barren desert whose capital, Jibuti, subsists almost entirely from its character of port for Abyssinia. The Italian colonies in the north and in the south-east, Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, rely to a great extent for supplies on the incomparably more fertile Abyssinia. In these circumstances it is only natural that these neighbours should be, to say the least, interested in the Empire and its potentialities and should seek to win all possible advantages from it.

The only neighbour which has hitherto sought to gain its object by force of arms is Italy. In 1896 the Italians made an attempt to extend their

colony of Eritrea at Abyssinia's expense; an attempt which failed utterly. On March 1st, 1896, the Italian army under General Baratieri's command was badly beaten at Adowa by the troops of Emperor Menelik II. Since that time until now Abyssinia has not been directly attacked. The reason for this lies partly in the political situation of other parts of the world and partly in the mutual mistrust and envy of the interested Powers.

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The nation which, at the end of the last century and the beginning of this, had the greatest influence over Abyssinia and the warmest sympathies within it was undoubtedly France. As early as 1843 a commercial treaty was signed by King Louis-Philippe of France and King Sahle Selassie of Shoa, albeit one of little practical significance. However, on March 20th, 1897, a secret treaty of friendship was formed between France and Emperor Menelik II, by which Jibuti was recognised as the official port of Abyssinia, and both parties agreed to co-operate closely in diplomatic, commercial and economic fields. France's reason for this alliance was the hope of Abyssinian aid in a contemplated extension of the French Central African colonies towards the Upper Nile; a hope which perished at Fashoda.

Finally a new treaty of friendship was concluded between the two countries on January 10th, 1908. This treaty, which is usually called by the name of

its author Klobukowski, the French Minister at the court of Menelik II, became afterwards of great importance in that the clauses relating to the position in Abyssinia of French subjects and all under French protection came to apply to all foreigners in the country. Article 7 in particular has been, and is, of the greatest importance. According to this, crimes or disputes in which Abyssinians and foreigners are involved are laid before the Abyssinian court of justice supported by the consul of the foreign country in question. If the accused is an Abyssinian he is judged according to Abyssinian law; if a foreigner, according to the law of his own country. Should the judges be of different opinions, the case is laid before the Emperor for his decision. If a crime or offence has been committed by a foreigner the Abyssinian authorities have the right to pursue and arrest him, but his own consul must be informed and must be given charge of him.

In 1906 a Frenchman, Chefneux, obtained a concession for the building and working of a railway between Jibuti and Harar. This railway, afterwards extended to Addis Ababa, is still owned by a French company in which the Abyssinian State is a shareholder. It is of exceptional importance not only as Abyssinia's best communication with foreign countries but also as a channel for French influence and culture. The French language, which is taught in all the more advanced Abyssinian schools, is the most widely known

foreign language in the country, and is spoken by a surprising number of natives.

Just recently, however, this French influence seems to have lessened considerably. Among leading circles in Abyssinia the opinion is widely held that, through her agreement with Italy at the beginning of January 1935, France has deserted Abyssinia and sacrificed her interests in that country, in order to win Italy's support in her European policy.

As regards Great Britain: a treaty was concluded on May 14th, 1897, between Queen Victoria and the Emperor Menelik II, regularising the position in Abyssinia of British subjects and those under British protection, and that of Abyssinian subjects in Great Britain or its possessions. The treaty, furthermore, fixed the boundary between Abyssinia and British Somaliland, and gave the Emperor the right to import arms through British dominions. At the same time Menelik undertook to prevent the transport of arms through Abyssinia to the Mahdists, who, he declared, were his enemies. By a new treaty of May 15th, 1902, the Sudanese-Abyssinian frontier was fixed, and at the same time the Emperor agreed to allow no engineering work to be started which would affect the Blue Nile, Lake Tsana or the River Sobat without an agreement having been made with both Britain and the Sudan.

The relations between Britain and Abyssinia of late years have always been friendly. Abyssinia has

noted with satisfaction the fairness shown by the British both in the fixing of boundaries between their own and native possessions, and upon other occasions; a fairness standing in glaring contrast to Italian behaviour on similar points. The consistent adherence of Great Britain to the League of Nations Covenant has won approval in Abyssinia and increased her respect for and confidence in this policy, although it is realised that it is the Empire's own interests which control the attitude and actions of the British Government.

As early as May 2nd, 1889, Count Antonelli, Italy's representative at the court of the Emperor Menelik, succeeded in concluding a treaty of commerce and friendship between his country and Abyssinia. In Article 17 of this treaty a clause was introduced which led to serious differences between the two parties. According to the Italian text, Menelik undertook to conduct his foreign policy through the Italian Government. According to the Abyssinian version, the Emperor *could* in his dealings with foreign powers employ the Italian Government as his agent. The two interpretations were irreconcilable. Menelik refused to submit to the Italian Government in questions of foreign policy, and on February 12th, 1893, he cancelled the treaty. The situation arising from this led three years later to the war which ended at Adowa. As has been already stated, by the peace of Addis Ababa, October 26th, 1896, Italy was obliged to acknowledge Abyssinia's complete

independence, and refrain from any attempts to take up the position of protector towards the Empire.

By the treaties of May 16th, 1908, and July 10th, 1910, the frontiers were determined between Abyssinia and Italian Somaliland and Abyssinia and Eritrea. The former boundary has, however, never been marked out on the territory itself. An attempt which was made in 1911 had to be abandoned owing to the Italians' refusal to put into practice the terms of the treaty. Herein lies one of the contributing causes to this latest conflict between Abyssinia and Italy.

While each of the neighbouring Powers thus sought to gain advantages for themselves and to adjust their relations with the Empire, they kept a watchful eye upon one another to see that none should gain greater influence than the others. At the beginning of the century, however, new competitors took the field. During the winter of 1904-1905 two *missions extraordinaires* from the Emperor of Austria-Hungary and the Emperor of Germany arrived in Addis Ababa, and in the spring of 1905 commercial treaties were concluded between Abyssinia and these two nations.

In the face of this butting-in, Pilate and Herod made friends, and in London on December 13th, 1906, England, France and Italy entered into an agreement with regard to Abyssinia. They bound themselves to respect her integrity and to refrain from intervening in her internal affairs. At the

same time they divided the country up into economic areas, and promised to support one another's interests in it. They were very eager in representing to the Emperor Menelik that this arrangement did not encroach upon his sovereign rights. The Emperor rejoined that he was grateful to the great Powers, his neighbours, for their interest in the freedom and integrity of Abyssinia, but that he did not consider himself in any way bound by the agreement they had made between themselves.

During the years immediately before and after the outbreak of the Great War Abyssinia was the scene of internal struggle and revolution. In 1913 Menelik died, and his successor, Lij Yassu, was obliged to defend his position by force. He mistrusted his neighbours and approached the Central Powers, who had kept on terms with him throughout. As these terms appeared to be growing more and more friendly—there was even talk of military action on Abyssinia's part in support of Turkey—the Entente Powers embraced the cause of his opponent, and in 1916 he was deposed. With that the danger to the Western nations was over. Ras Tafari came into power, and under his wise leadership Abyssinia sought to avoid strife with her neighbours.

In 1923 Abyssinia joined the League of Nations. Two years earlier Abyssinia had been obliged to draw the League's attention to an exchange of notes which had taken place between Great Britain and Italy. By these notes they bound themselves

to mutual support in their respective enterprises: in Britain's case the laying down of a road from the Sudan to Lake Tsana, and in Italy's the building of a railway from Eritrea running west of Addis Ababa to Italian Somaliland. Ras Tafari considered that these notes showed an intention to injure his sovereign rights, and therefore appealed to the League of Nations. Great Britain denied all intention of violating Abyssinia's integrity and independence, and the matter was dropped.

From this event onwards there can be traced a tendency on the part of Italy to act alone where Abyssinia was concerned, without the co-operation of other Powers. In order to attract Abyssinian trade, Italy offered in 1928 a free port in Assab, Eritrea, to the Abyssinian Government on condition that Abyssinia in her turn should build a motor-road from Addis Ababa via Dessie to Assab, although this arrangement was in direct opposition to French interests. The offer was accepted, and on August 2nd of the same year a convention relating to it was signed, also a treaty of friendship between the two countries. As this treaty came to play an important part in the conflict with Italy, it is given in full in the Appendix on pages 181-183.

Up to the present the Assab convention has not been carried out. When representatives of both parties began to mark out the road between Assab and Dessie a dispute immediately arose. The Abyssinian commissioner proposed to bring the road immediately to Dessie from Assab in a

westerly direction, whereas the Italians demanded that from Assab the road should curve in a south-westerly and southerly direction towards Diré Dawa, and only then turn north-westwards towards Dessie. When it became plain from other indications that Italy was striving to connect her two colonies by means of a zone through the eastern part of Abyssinia, the reason for her insistence on the more round-about route became clear. As neither party would give way negotiations were without result, as in the matter of the Abyssinian-Somaliland frontier.

The treaty of friendship entered into at the same time as the Assab convention thus lost its worth. It became plainer every day that Italy did not contemplate friendly co-operation, but that her object was to subjugate Abyssinia, or at any rate to gain control of her. To attain this object a methodical work of preparation was started, increasing in intensity as time went on. This work consisted partly in undermining the Empire from within, partly in outrageous propaganda in Europe and finally in direct military measures.

During recent years Italy had installed in Abyssinia a crowd of consuls and *agents commerciaux* in places where there was not a single Italian or any good reason for their presence. These people, who had many agents working under them, carried on intensive pro-Italian propaganda, distributed arms and bribes and tried to stir up feeling in the different districts against

the central Government, while at the same time striving with all their might to provoke dissensions among local authorities: dissensions which gave the Italian Government a pretext for interference and for attacks on Abyssinia in the Fascist press.

As before stated, the frontier between Abyssinia and Italian Somaliland had been fixed by the treaty of May 16th, 1908, but never demarcated on the territory itself. This territory, which consists of desert land with few watering-places, is inhabited by nomad tribes which wander from place to place after good grazing, taking no note of the political boundary. Under pretext of keeping order among those tribes which are under Italian protection, the Italians pushed their forces far within Abyssinian territory. So long as this happened only occasionally, the Abyssinian Government, wishful to avoid open conflict, thought it better to offer no resistance. However, it gradually became clear that the Italian aim was to annex in this way the south-eastern portion of the province of the Ogaden, which, according to the terms of the frontier treaty, quite clearly belongs to Abyssinia. Italian troops were sent to garrison the watering-places—Wal-Wal, Wardair, Afdub and others—situated more than sixty miles on the Abyssinian side of the border. On all official and unofficial British, German and Italian maps this frontier is shown. It is significant that during the spring of 1935 the Italian Government withdrew all the official maps published by the Colonial Ministry, on which the

frontier was marked according to the treaty, and brought out new editions from which it was omitted.

Simultaneously with the measures described above, the Fascist press embarked on an extensive propaganda campaign, representing Abyssinia as a country which threatened the safety of the adjoining states. It was declared that Abyssinia was preparing for war and importing vast quantities of war materials; that she was giving concessions and preference to Japan, and that Japanese penetration of the country meant serious danger to the whole of Europe. Finally it was reiterated that Abyssinia must be taken in hand and civilised, and an end put to the slavery which, according to the same press, was rampant among her poor, oppressed peoples. The object of this propaganda was very plain. World opinion must be so worked upon that, when the time was ripe, an attack on Abyssinia would be universally approved; and it was not hard to guess who would undertake the 'punitive expedition'.

That the Fascist press propaganda was not based on actual fact need hardly be mentioned. The statement, for instance, that Abyssinia would pursue an aggressive policy against the great Powers who were her neighbours is belied by its own absurdity. Every thinking person must see that the Italian proposition as to the danger of Abyssinia has about the same value as the wolf's complaint that he had been injured by the lamb at the stream.

As to the much-talked-of importation of war materials, it should be noted that Abyssinia has no arms factories. Every weapon and every cartridge must be imported. In the European press, which had its information from Rome, the importation of arms took on enormous proportions. Actually Abyssinian imports of recent years represented only a fraction of the masses of weapons and ammunition transported from Italy to Eritrea and Italian Somaliland during the same period.

The assertion that Japan had been granted concessions and advantages in Abyssinia lacked all foundation. Nevertheless this falsehood seems to have gained belief all over Europe, where it was not possible to check the facts. Certainly the Abyssinian Government wished to maintain close and friendly relations with Japan as with any other country with whom an exchange of goods would be mutually advantageous. No closer co-operation than this prevailed; and a proof of it is that in 1935 Japan was still unrepresented in Abyssinia either by a legation or a consulate. No concessions had been granted, and the alleged Japanese penetration amounted, in 1934, to three Japanese in the whole country. This colossal invasion was reduced in 1935 to two individuals in the retail trade in Addis Ababa! This example should be enough to demonstrate the falsehood of the Italian allegations and the unabashed methods of Fascist propaganda.

As to the necessity of civilising the Abyssinians, the present Emperor had striven throughout his

reign to raise the intellectual level of his people. The impartial observer could also note that astonishing progress had been made in this. Much still remained to do, but the Emperor and his colleagues considered that the work should proceed as an evolution, not as a revolution. They were grateful for every kind of honest help which might be given them from abroad, but they and the Abyssinian people were suspicious of a civilisation which was to be forced upon them by means of machine-guns, tanks, bombs and poison gas. They had also had the opportunity of observing at close quarters that the blessings of Italian civilisation in Eritrea and Somaliland consisted not only in better communications and other material advantages, but also in police espionage, political persecution, concentration camps and prisons. They were therefore firmly resolved to resist by all means the spreading of this kind of civilisation in Abyssinia.

Simultaneously with the propaganda work already mentioned, military preparations were going on in the Italian colonies. During the summer of 1934 these preparations took on such proportions that the Abyssinian Government was constrained to protest to Rome at the unjustified armament in Eritrea and Italian Somaliland. To this protest the Italian Government replied in vague terms, and the transportation of troops, arms and ammunition continued.

Tension between the two governments was further increased by an incident which occurred in

the town of Gondar at the beginning of November 1934. Some servants belonging to the Italian consulate in that town fell foul of a couple of local police, and in the scuffle one of the Italian servants—who was incidentally Abyssinian by birth—was unfortunately killed. The quarrel started in a house of bad repute in the town, and was about some of the women there. Nevertheless the Italian Minister in Addis Ababa chose to make a great diplomatic affair out of the matter, and on behalf of his Government demanded apologies and damages. To avoid the split so clearly sought by the Italians the Abyssinian Government gave in, although the demands were utterly unjustifiable.

Then on December 5th of that year came the clash between Abyssinian and Italian troops at Wal-Wal, and with that the tension between the two countries resolved itself into open conflict.

XII

THE CONFLICT WITH ITALY

EARLY in the morning of December 5th, 1934, I was summoned to the Emperor. On my arrival at the pavilion at the Little Gibi I found the other advisers, Maître Auberson and Mr. Colson, already there. After waiting a short time we were shown in to his Imperial Majesty, who looked grave and worried. He told us that a report had come in from the Ogaden via Harar that the Anglo-Abyssinian Frontier Commission, then studying grazing conditions in the Ogaden, had been stopped at Wal-Wal in that province by Italian troops, and had been prevented from continuing their investigations. The Abyssinian armed escort attending the commission was now massed opposite the Italian troops at a distance of some ten yards. The Emperor desired our advice on the matter. I stressed the danger of two forces lying opposite one another with, as it were, their fingers on the trigger. At any moment a shot might be fired and with that general fighting would break out. The Emperor replied that he perceived the gravity of the situation very clearly, and that he should immediately issue orders to his troops to behave with caution, albeit the Italians had no

business to remain so far within the Abyssinian border. It was then further decided that the native Government should convey a protest through its Foreign Minister to the Italian Minister in Addis Ababa, and that this verbal protest should at once be followed up by a note. This was done. Immediately after the written protest had been handed in at the Italian Legation on the morning of December 6th, a telegram arrived with the news that on the previous afternoon a very severe battle had taken place at Wal-Wal between the escort of the International Commission and the Italian troops. The events leading up to this had been as follows.

For some years an Anglo-Abyssinian commission had been working on the demarcation of the frontier between British Somaliland and Abyssinia, and at the same time examining the facilities for grazing and watering for the nomad races on either side of the border. The commission was guarded by an escort of Abyssinian troops who were responsible for its safety.

On November 22nd, 1934, this escort arrived at the watering-place of Wal-Wal, followed the next day by the commission itself. This place, which is situated in the province of Ogaden seventy miles within the frontier fixed by the treaty of May 16th, 1908, they found to be occupied by Italian troops. The officer in command, Captain Cimarutta, declared in a brusque and high-handed fashion that he did not intend to allow the commission to proceed further. The members protested in strong

terms against the behaviour of the Italians, and demanded that a protest should also be conveyed to the Italian authorities to the effect that Italian troops far within the Abyssinian boundary were interfering with the work of an international commission. At the same time the British and Abyssinian flags were hoisted over the respective camps. During the discussion between the commission and the Italian officer in command, Italian aeroplanes suddenly appeared, flew low over the camp and aimed machine-guns at the members of the commission. In the face of this aggressive attitude the commission decided to withdraw, so as to avoid international complications, to Ado—a place about twenty miles north-west of Wal-Wal—there to await the answer to their written protest. The Abyssinian escort remained at Wal-Wal, however, partly to cover the commission's retreat and partly because sufficient water for their numerous horses and mules was not to be found at Ado. Thus, as has already been described, Abyssinian and Italian soldiers lay opposite one another at a few yards' distance, divided only by a provisional line of boughs and brambles. Such was the situation up to December 5th, by which time no answer had yet arrived from the Italian authorities to the commission's protest.

On December 4th certain activities were observed in the Italian camp. In the morning three Italian officers of the line arrived—the Italian troops at Wal-Wal consisted of natives—who proceeded to reconnoitre the whole front carefully. The

Italian machines, which hitherto had confined their flights to within the line marked on the ground, now extended them over the Abyssinian camp. At midday on December 5th four letters were handed to the officer commanding the Abyssinian escort, written in Italian. As the officer did not understand this language he sent the letters by car to the commission in Ado, according to previous instructions. They proved to be identical, and were from the Italian officer in command conveying a warning in threatening terms against any attempt at attack on the part of the Abyssinians.

About a quarter of an hour after the letters left the Abyssinian camp—the time was then 3.30—whistle-signals were suddenly heard from the Italian camp, followed by the commands, 'Take cover!' 'Fire!' Ten minutes later three aeroplanes and a tank advanced, dropping bombs and directing machine-gun fire upon the Abyssinian camp.

At the above hour, 3.30, only sentries were on duty here. The remainder of the escort were in the tents resting or preparing food. Their two machine-guns stood with their covers on by the C.O.'s tent, whence they could not be fired. Fitaurari (Lieutenant-General) Alemaychu, a relative of the Emperor, was in his tent when the Italian firing started, and in dashing out was badly wounded in the left shoulder, and immediately afterwards fell with a bullet in his forehead. There was at first great disorder and confusion in the Abyssinian camp, and many soldiers were wounded or killed

before they could seize their weapons. In time, however, the men took up their posts and answered the Italian fire. About three-quarters of an hour after the attack the Italian troops began to give way, and immediately afterwards were in full retreat. The Italian aeroplanes thereupon ceased their work over the Abyssinian camp and directed bombs and machine-gun fire over and in front of those in retreat, forcing them to stand. Here it should be emphasised that, with the exception of the aeroplanes and tank corps, the Italian force consisted of troops from Somaliland.

The battle continued and the Abyssinians suffered severe losses owing to their lack of equipment to resist aerial and tank attacks. Firing continued after darkness had fallen, but when at 1 A.M. ammunition began to give out, the new Abyssinian C.O. decided to withdraw under cover of darkness to Ado, where what was left of the escort carrying their wounded arrived at about 7 A.M. The Abyssinian losses amounted to 107 killed and about 50 wounded.

In view of these events the international commission decided to withdraw once more as far as Jijiga. The move was made in several journeys during the next few days, owing to the shortage of means of transport. On December 8th, as the last party was leaving Ado under the command of a British and an Abyssinian officer, it was attacked by an Italian aeroplane which dropped five bombs. At the same time Italian machines flew all over the

province of Ogaden, far into Abyssinia, and bombed, among other places, Gerlogubi, where Abyssinian troops were stationed.

As soon as information as to the Italian action at Wal-Wal on December 5th had been received, the Abyssinian Government, as already stated, made a verbal protest to the Italian *chargé d'affaires* in Addis Ababa, followed by a written one on the morning of December 6th. The minister was on leave in his own country. On the same day the Government received word of the battle of the 5th, and on the 7th reiterated their protest, requesting a prompt reply. Without giving a direct answer to the Abyssinian notes the Italian *chargé d'affaires* informed the Government verbally on December 8th that his own Government would demand apologies and indemnity for the incident at Wal-Wal. The Abyssinian Government then proposed that the question should be referred to arbitration according to the terms of Article 5 in the treaty of August 2nd, 1928, between Italy and Abyssinia (see Appendix). The same proposal was made simultaneously by the Abyssinian *chargé d'affaires* in Rome.

On December 11th the Italian *chargé d'affaires* in Addis Ababa presented a note without comment or explanation, in which he declared on behalf of his Government:

- (a) That Wal-Wal was situated in Italian Somali-land.

- (b) That the Italian officer in command at Wal-Wal had acted quite rightly.
- (c) That all responsibility for the incident fell upon the Abyssinian Government.
- (d) That the Italian Government demanded 200,000 dollars indemnity, apologies, punishment of the Abyssinian officers in command at Wal-Wal, and a salute to the Italian flag by troops assembled for that purpose.

As two days earlier the Abyssinian Government had proposed arbitration—a proposal not even referred to in the Italian note—we merely repeated the suggestion. This was on December 13th. At noon on the 14th a note arrived from the Italian Legation declaring that the Italian Government ‘failed to see how a question of such a nature as the Wal-Wal incident could be submitted to arbitration’, and repeated the demand for apologies, compensation, etc. As the contents of this note had to be recognised as a refusal of our arbitration proposals, we suggested to the Emperor on the afternoon of that day, December 14th, that he should call the attention of the League of Nations Council to the seriousness of the position. This was done in a telegram despatched that night.

During the latter half of December 1934 we had the heavy task of collecting reports of the events at Wal-Wal, interrogating those who took part, studying documents relating to the frontier

between Abyssinia and Italian Somaliland, and other matters, in order that when Abyssinia put her case before the League Council it might be well documented. When the Council met in the middle of January 1935 we were able to present a detailed dossier relating to the conflict, containing a report of the Wal-Wal incident, of the diplomatic exchange of notes, of the treaties and conventions in force between Italy and Abyssinia, of the topographical documents which made clear the grounds of the dispute and of the legal aspects of the case. Thanks to this work completed in advance, we could, during the many long months of negotiation which followed, continually refer our questioners to the dossier, in which all necessary information was given. Corresponding reports from Italy were not forthcoming until the meeting of the arbitrators in June 1935, half a year later.

On January 19th the League of Nations Council made its first decision in the Italo-Abyssinian question. This decision had been preceded by long individual negotiations wherein M. Laval, the French Foreign Minister, was chief mediator. It was finally agreed that the two representatives of the disputing parties should each present to the Secretary General to the League their written assent to arbitration according to the terms of the Italo-Abyssinian agreement of August 2nd, 1928, and Article 5 therein (see Appendix). Backed by these letters, the Council passed the following resolution:

The Council having noted the letters addressed to the Secretary General by the representative of the Government of Italy of the one part and by the representative of the Government of Abyssinia of the second part, in which, moved by the spirit of conciliation, they declare themselves willing to settle the dispute in conformity with the Treaty of Friendship of 1928, and of article 5 of the said Treaty, and noting that they undertake to adopt all appropriate measures and to confirm or issue all necessary instructions in order to avoid further incidents, postpones until next session the discussion of the Ethiopian petition.

It is apparent already in this first resolution that the League of Nations Council sought to avoid taking up any attitude towards the dispute itself; a fact which had been noticeable during the negotiations preceding the resolution. Only a fortnight earlier France had made a pact with Italy in Rome, and naturally was not inclined to endanger these friendly relations by a resolution which might be a rebuff.

The Abyssinian delegates at Geneva—Mr. Teklé Hawariat, the minister in Paris, and the French professor Dr. Jèze—had, only after much hesitation and strong coercion, consented to adjourn discussion of the dispute until a future meeting of the Council. Direct negotiation between Italy and Abyssinia had already broken down before Abyssinia appealed to the League over Italy's indemnity claims and refusal to arbitrate.

However, in accordance with the League Council's decision, negotiations were resumed with Count Vinci, the Italian Minister at Addis Ababa, who

had returned to his post at the New Year. An Italian proposal to establish a neutral zone between Abyssinian and Italian troops in the Ogaden to prevent further clashes was accepted. The real motive for this proposal was less a desire to avoid fighting than Italian fears of an Abyssinian attack on Italian Somaliland, which at that time still lacked adequate defences.

Although we well perceived the true reason for the Italian proposal, and the possible consequences of establishing a neutral zone so far within Abyssinian territory, we decided to recommend the Emperor's acceptance as a token of the Abyssinian desire for peace. However, when details of demarcation came to be decided, difficulties immediately arose. The Emperor desired, among other things, to place a Belgian and a Swedish officer at the service of the Abyssinian Government as consulting experts to the Abyssinian Commission, which was to work in conjunction with the Italian authorities. This met with strong opposition from the Italians, and the Government in Rome made representations in Stockholm and Brussels which resulted in a telegram for me from the Swedish Defence Department, forbidding Swedish officers to undertake tasks of a political character. Before this telegram arrived, however, the Emperor had already decided to withdraw his request. At last, on February 27th, 1935, the negotiations relating to the neutral zone were completed.

When, after a month's work, this question had

been settled, the main problems were examined; namely, whether Wal-Wal belonged to Abyssinia or to Italy, and on whom the responsibility devolved for the battle at that place. Throughout the ensuing conversations the Italian Minister reiterated that he had received only general instructions from his Government, and that he was expressing merely his personal views. He adhered to the position taken up in the Italian note of December 14th, 1934, with regard to the payment of compensation, etc., after which other questions could be settled. In order to decide to whom Wal-Wal belonged he proposed to entrust the demarcation of a boundary between Abyssinia and Italian Somaliland to a commission composed exclusively of Italians and Abyssinians, who should base their decisions on the treaty of May 16th, 1908, without previous impartial interpretation of the terms of the treaty. Such a proceeding would, if agreed to by us, have brought us back to where we were when Abyssinia appealed to the League—with this difference, that Italy throughout the period of negotiation had strengthened her military position by extensive transportation of troops, arms and raw materials from Italy to Eritrea and Italian Somaliland. As a pretext for these intensive military measures Italy cited: first, the concentrating of Abyssinian troops—which had never taken place; secondly, an Abyssinian attack on some Italian forces at Afdub—an attack which, in reality, had been made by Italians on an Abyssinian guard at Gerlogubi, twelve miles west

of Afdub; and lastly, an alleged Abyssinian attack on February 2nd, 1935, on Afdub, owing to which the place had had to be abandoned by its Italian garrison. This last "attack" was a pure invention without any foundation whatsoever, for the Italians had already evacuated Afdub on January 29th, 1935, after the attempt on Gerlogubi, probably owing to water shortage. Thus on February 2nd there was not one single man at Afdub.

To end these conversations, which were profitless, the Abyssinian Government, in notes of the 20th, 21st and 27th of February 1935, requested the setting up of a court of arbitration in accordance with the terms in Article 5 of the treaty of August 2nd, 1928. No answer being received, the Abyssinian Government declared in a new note of March 8th, 1935, that in no circumstances would it pay any indemnity or other reparations unless judged liable on an impartial examination. The note further stated that the Abyssinian Government now considered all diplomatic negotiation at an end, and once more desired a reply to the question whether or no the Italian Government, in accordance with the League Council's decision of January 19th, 1935, would submit the question to arbitration. Finally the Abyssinian Government declared in a note of March 16th to the Italian Minister in Addis Ababa that, as no reply had been received from Italy to the repeated requests for arbitration, the Government found itself obliged to refer the matter once more to the League of Nations Council.

These notes naturally greatly displeased the Italian Minister. Italian tactics, represented by him, had aimed all along at forcing Abyssinia by hook or by crook to pay an indemnity; then, when Abyssinia had thereby indirectly acknowledged herself in the wrong, Italy, in a stronger position, would be able to take further steps without the intervention of the League of Nations. The notes of March 8th and 16th wiped out those plans.

On April 15th Abyssinia's new appeal was set before the League Council, which had called a special meeting in Geneva. The Council decided that the question should be put on the agenda to be dealt with at the ordinary meeting on May 22nd, 1935.

Italy, who at this extraordinary meeting defended her failure to submit the dispute to arbitration with the excuse that both parties had agreed to settle it by direct negotiation—an interpretation of Article 5 in the treaty of August 2nd, 1928, which may be described as Machiavellian—now made up her mind, four months after the decision had been made, to choose members for the court of arbitration. She selected two of her higher functionaries: the Ambassador Count Luigi Aldrovandi and Conseiller d'État Raffaele Montagna; while Abyssinia chose two neutrals: the French Professor De Lapradelle and Professor P. B. Potter of America, both well-known authorities on international law.

At the ordinary meeting of the Council in May the Abyssinian delegates strove to obtain the

Council's admission, firstly, that direct negotiation between Italy and Abyssinia must be regarded as having broken down, and that therefore arbitration must be resorted to; and secondly, that all the disputed points, including the interpretation of the frontier treaty of May 16th, 1908—the basis for determining to which country Wal-Wal belonged—must be submitted to the said court of arbitration. Of these two objects the first was achieved, but not the second. The Italian delegate, Baron Aloisi, expressed himself in vague terms, and in the Council's resolutions nothing was said as to the extent of the arbitrators' task. Herein lay the chief cause of the subsequent breakdown.

On May 24th the League Council passed two resolutions, the first of which was as follows:

(1) Whereas, at the meeting of the Council in January 1935, the Italian Government and the Ethiopian Government agreed to settle the dispute which has arisen between them as the result of the incident at Walwal on December 5, 1934, in conformity with Article 5 of the Italo-Ethiopian Treaty of August 2, 1928;

(2) Whereas, direct negotiations through diplomatic channels having been exhausted, the two parties have nominated their arbitrators as provided for in Article 5 of the above-mentioned Treaty;

(3) Whereas, since December 5, 1934, other incidents have taken place on the Italo-Ethiopian frontier and the two Governments are in agreement in entrusting the settlement of these incidents to the same arbitrators in accordance with Article 5 of the Italo-Ethiopian Treaty;

(4) Whereas the Italian Government, in view of the

request which has been made to it, makes no objection regarding the nationality of the arbitrators nominated by the Ethiopian Government;

(5) Whereas the two Governments agree to fix August 25 next as the date on which the procedure of conciliation and arbitration shall be concluded:

The Council

Requests the Secretary-General of the League of Nations to communicate in the meantime to the Members of the Council all information which may reach him from the two parties, in particular regarding the development of the arbitrators' work.¹

The second resolution decreed that the Council should reassemble (*a*) in the event of the arbitrators' inability to settle the dispute, or to agree in the choice of a fifth member, and (*b*) should the dispute not have been settled by the date fixed, August 25th, either by conciliation or arbitration.

In a note on June 1st, 1935, the Italian Minister in Addis Ababa announced that in no circumstances could his Government permit the submitting of questions other than that relating to the direct responsibility for the Wal-Wal incident to arbitration. Thus the court of arbitration had no right to take up the question of frontiers or of the interpretation of the treaty of May 16th, 1908. The Italian Government realised that it could not legally support its contention that Wal-Wal was situated in Italian Somaliland, and solved the problem by simply refusing to allow the court to look into the matter! It was as if a man who had

¹ *League of Nations Official Journal*, June 1935, p. 640.

been attacked was forbidden to show proof that he had been attacked in his own house.

The Abyssinian Government replied to this note on June 3rd, 1935, pointing out that the Wal-Wal incident was a detail beside the big problems to be solved, and that the Abyssinian Government would persist in its endeavour to settle all questions by arbitration. In the event of the representatives of the two parties being unable to reach an agreement on this point, it was for the League of Nations Council, and not for either of the parties, to interpret the terms of the resolution of May 25th, 1935. In the view of the Abyssinian Government the Wal-Wal incident could not be judged or decided upon by the arbitrators without regard to the treaties and agreements in force concerning the frontier between Abyssinia and Italian Somaliland.

At the end of June 1935 the chosen arbitrators met, first in Milan and afterwards at the Hague.

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Throughout the whole period during which these negotiations took place, the transportation of arms and munitions from Italy to her East African colonies, begun during the summer of 1934, had continued. On February 11th an order was issued for the mobilisation of three divisions of the line and two blackshirt divisions at home, and in each colony a new native division was formed. At first the Italian Government alleged that these military

steps were taken purely to ensure the security of the colonies, but as time went on the true aim—that of subjugating Abyssinia by force—became clearer and clearer. It was plainly Italy's firm resolve, no matter how the arbitration went, to impose her will by force. A war between Italy and Abyssinia might, however, be fateful not only for the two parties, but also for their neighbours Great Britain and France. Britain in particular had every reason to keep a watchful eye on developments. A war in East Africa would certainly have repercussions not only within the African continent but also in Arabia and India. By the treaty of December 13th, 1906, the three neighbouring Powers had bound themselves to respect Abyssinia's integrity. Now one of them, Italy, regardless of previous agreements, was determined to sacrifice everything to her own interests. From Great Britain's point of view it was awkward enough that Lake Tsana, the source of the Blue Nile, should be in Abyssinian hands, but it would be a far more serious thing were a European Power to gain control of it.

Again, British interests would be threatened should Italy gain mastery of the Red Sea, and so be in a position to endanger Britain's communications with India. Mussolini's talk of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea as *mare romanum* must have had an evil sound in English ears. By agreement with France at the beginning of January 1935 Italy had received the northern corner of

French Somaliland and with it the western shore of the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, where she had immediately begun the construction of strong coastal defences. All this meant that Britain could not look on unconcerned at Italy's preparations for war.

Finally, support of League authority and the League Covenant was one of the corner-stones of British policy. Mussolini's threat to Abyssinia, who was a member of the League, must, from this point of view, also be in opposition to British interests.

Immediately after the fight at Wal-Wal, Sir Sidney Barton, the British Minister in Addis Ababa, had pointed out to the Emperor the serious consequences of a war, and recommended a friendly settlement without appealing to the League of Nations. However, Italy's unjust demands made the appeal unavoidable. At the Council meetings of January, April and May, Mr. Eden, the British delegate, worked energetically and well for a smoothing-out of the dispute, and on June 24th, 1935, during a visit to Rome, he laid a proposal before Mussolini by which, among other things, Abyssinia should receive from Britain the port of Zeila in British Somaliland, and in return make over to Italy a part of the Ogaden and grant her certain diplomatic concessions. The offer was abruptly refused.

As before mentioned, the arbitrators in the Wal-Wal affair began their work at the end of June

1935. After only a couple of weeks it was clear that the delegates of both parties were of such opposite opinions that no conclusion could be reached, and on July 9th the discussions were broken off.

On Italy's issuing a new mobilisation order for yet another three line divisions and three black-shirt divisions, the Abyssinian Government both protested against these military measures and asked that the League of Nations Council might be speedily summoned for a reconsideration of the Italo-Abyssinian question.

The Council met on July 31st. The Abyssinian delegates asked the Council to determine the extent of the arbitrators' powers and to choose a fifth member. The Italian delegates continued to maintain that the question of Wal-Wal's ownership was not to be handled by the arbitrators, and were of opinion, anyhow at first, that a fifth arbitrator was not desirable. After lengthy private discussions between Mr. Eden and M. Laval and the delegates of both sides, the Council passed a resolution on August 3rd, 1935, by which it was decreed that the work of arbitration should continue, that a fifth arbitrator should be chosen, but that only the question of the responsibility for the battle at Wal-Wal and points related to it should be dealt with; and herein the views of the local authorities should be taken into account. At the same time, by another resolution the Council decided to deal with the Italo-Abyssinian conflict in all its aspects at the meeting in the following

September. Finally the three Great Powers, Britain, France and Italy, agreed that during the interval before this meeting they would endeavour by means of discussions in Paris to arrive at a solution based on the agreement of December 13th, 1906.

While proceeding with intensive military preparations the Italian Government took steps at the same time to influence the smaller European states, and induce them to forbid exportation of war materials to Abyssinia. Unfortunately this coercion was successful. In spite of a valid treaty of the year 1930 which allowed of the importation of arms, many states forbade the export of war materials. Abyssinia, who manufactured no arms herself, was in the position of being unable to obtain necessary means of defence, while on her borders Italian troops and Italian war materials were piling up every day; this on account of a procedure described as neutral by the states concerned. In August 1935 the Abyssinian Government protested to the League of Nations Council against this situation, pointing out with some acerbity that although the League of Nations had referred it to the court of arbitration, the Italian Government continued to send large numbers of troops and quantities of war material to East Africa, officially declaring them to be destined for use against Abyssinia. At the same time, wherever the Abyssinian Government sought to purchase arms it met with a refusal. Could the

League Council remain indifferent to such a situation? Had the Council the intention of permitting war between two members of the League, of which one was able to avail itself of all the materials to prepare and carry out the offensive, while the other weaker party, which had respected all its international undertakings and engagements, was denied all means of defence? Did the Council consider that it could be answerable to the rest of the world for allowing, without intervention, one of its members to prepare systematically for a war of aggression against another member which had threatened no one?

Before the three Powers began their discussions in Paris, the British Government enquired through its Minister in Addis Ababa, what sacrifices Abyssinia was prepared to make in order to prove her willingness to obtain a friendly solution of the dispute. We discussed this point long and fully with the Emperor, who found himself in a difficult situation. He himself was determined to fulfil minutely his international obligations and, as far as his honour and that of his country allowed, seek to preserve peace. But much pressure was brought to bear on him by his own people, who considered that he had already given in too far and for too long to the exorbitant and entirely unjustified demands of Italy. The memory of the Adowa victory was still fresh in their minds, and the masses had no conception of the way in which arms had developed since that time; they were

persuaded that Abyssinia would be able to meet the hated Italian as successfully as she did forty years ago. Therefore the Emperor's desire for peace was not always understood either by the leaders or the people; yet during those long months he never hesitated to do everything possible to save them from the scourge of war, even though it won him disapproval and blame. It was the same now. After carefully weighing the situation he informed the British Government that he intended to stand by the British proposal to relinquish a portion of the Ogaden in return for access to the sea. He further offered to make over to Italy part of the province of Aussa, which borders on Southern Eritrea; to reopen the question of a motor-road between Dessie and Assab, and to permit the building of a motor-road between Eritrea and the town of Gondar. In return he asked for an international loan to enable him to develop communications, and to bring about reforms in the administration and in law. To check the uses to which this loan was put and to help in the work of reform he undertook to appoint foreign experts from among candidates chosen by the League. Finally he suggested that the agreement of December 1906 should be replaced by a treaty between the three Powers and Abyssinia.

It was soon seen, however, that the Emperor's willingness to make sacrifices and the efforts of the British Government were thrown away. During

the Paris negotiations in the middle of August 1935, the Italian delegate, Baron Aloisi, declared that these proposals did not satisfy the Italian demands, and Mussolini treated the assembled diplomats really rudely by leaving to inspect blackshirts bound for East Africa, and allowing the conference to wait several days for his refusal of their offers. The assembly then had to break up without having achieved any result.

In accordance with the resolution passed by the League of Nations Council on August 3rd, the arbitrators met in Paris at the end of the month and chose as a fifth the Greek Minister in Paris, M. Politis. The day that the League Council reassembled in Geneva, September 4th, 1935, the arbitrators handed in their verdict, which might be called worthy of Solomon. It was to the effect that the Wal-Wal fight must be regarded as a sheer accident for which neither party could be held responsible. When one considers that in passing this verdict the ownership of Wal-Wal might not be taken into account, and remembers the demands persisted in by the Italians for indemnity, punishment, humiliating apologies, etc., one must acknowledge that, although Abyssinia did not get full justice, her case stood the test.

With the arbitrators' exculpating verdict, the excuse for Italy's aggressive attitude was gone. The fight at Wal-Wal, however, had only been a pretext for a war of aggression which had been intended long before the clash occurred. Italy had

now to find another argument to cover her intentions. At the League Council meeting on September 4th the Italian delegate produced a voluminous accusation in which Abyssinia was stated, among other charges, to have refused to demarcate her boundaries between her territory and that of the Italian colonies, to have disregarded the immunity of Italian delegates and consuls, to have made successful attempts on the life and property of Italian subjects, etc. Further, it was stated, Abyssinia carried on slave traffic and supported slavery; it was a country of barbarians unfit to associate with civilised nations, or to belong to the League; and it was for Italy to uphold the prestige of the League and her own honour.

As Abyssinia did not receive notice of these allegations before the meeting of the Council, the Emperor merely gave his Geneva delegates instructions to return a concise reply to them, and to request that the League Council should appoint impartial observers to test on the spot the reliability of the Italian accusations.

By the beginning of September both the other two advisers and myself were suffering from strain, and as it was expected that the organisation of the work in Geneva would take some time, we obtained the Emperor's permission to spend a few days at Bishofto, a tourist hotel situated at a height of 6000 feet, a couple of hours' train-journey from Addis Ababa. We felt like schoolboys on holiday when, on the morning of September 6th, the train

left the capital. The difference in altitude of 1500 or 2000 feet between Addis Ababa and Bishofto is enough to afford relief and rest to the heart. By midday we had arrived at Addas station where mules awaited us, and after twenty minutes' ride we reached the hotel, which is beautifully situated on the edge of a crater lake. After lunch we were sitting on the verandah enjoying peace, freedom and the view, when suddenly the proprietress came rushing, in wild agitation, to tell us that, according to a telephone message from the station, the Emperor was on his way to Bishofto. In the same breath she begged to be allowed to take a Biblical picture from my room and exchange it for one of a very, shall I say, worldly lady now adorning the walls of one of the rooms she intended for the Emperor's use. The telephone message soon proved to be a false alarm. It was not the Emperor, but the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Ato Tasffai Tagegne, who was on his way to Addas on a motor-trolley. An hour later he arrived at the hotel with the news that the Italian delegate in Geneva had left the conference table when Professor Jèze, one of the Abyssinian delegates, had begun to speak. It was now suggested from Geneva that Professor Jèze, who was accused of using wounding expressions, should be asked to resign. The Emperor desired our opinion.

After a short discussion it was apparent to all of us that a change of delegate at such a decisive moment was most undesirable and might have

serious consequences. We also perceived that the suggestion had come from France, and was intended to save Italy's face and induce her to return to the negotiations. However, there was no reason why Abyssinia should pull Italian chestnuts out of the fire, so we decided to advise firmly against a change. After some conversation by telephone during the night with the Emperor's *secrétaire spécial*, we boarded the motor-trolley on the morning of September 7th and, in pouring rain, returned to Addis Ababa, going straight to the Great Gibi from the station. Thus ended our longed-for holiday, which had lasted but a few hours.

In accordance with our suggestion the Emperor decided that Professor Jèze should remain at his post as Abyssinian delegate, and with that the matter was settled.

To test the Italian accusations and to find a solution to the Italo-Abyssinian conflict the League of Nations Council set up a Committee of Five. This committee, after careful investigation, formulated a proposal which was submitted to the governments of both parties. In this was stressed, first of all, the importance of ensuring that the integrity and independence of nations belonging to the League were respected. The following was then suggested, to be achieved with the help of foreign experts:

- (a) A police force should be organised in Abyssinia for the purpose of maintaining

order at the frontier and within certain of the districts inhabited by Europeans, etc.

- (b) Measures should be taken to improve the economic conditions in the country: to develop agriculture, mining and foreign trade.
- (c) A budget should be established and a record kept of national expenditure, taxes and foreign loans.
- (d) Reforms should be instituted in law, education and public health.

The proposal further contained the terms on which the experts should be appointed and particulars of their status in relation to the Emperor and the League of Nations, etc., and finally the information that the British and French delegates had advised the committee of the willingness of their respective governments to contribute towards a peaceful settlement, by admitting of certain adjustments on the frontiers between the Italian colonies and Abyssinia, and compensating the latter country by relinquishing to her certain parts of the Somali territory. The delegates of these two Powers had also stated that their respective governments acknowledged Italy's special economic interests in Abyssinia, but did not swerve from the principle of equal status for all foreigners in the country, nor from the basis on which its foreign policy was conducted.

The drafting of a reply to this proposal was the last task in which I took part during my Abyssinian

service. In this reply the Emperor expressed his satisfaction that the proposal respected Abyssinian sovereignty, and his acceptance of it as a basis for further negotiation. Before despatching this note we had ascertained that the Italian reply would be a refusal, and therefore judged it wiser not to go into details of the proposal, of which many were doubtful from the Abyssinian point of view, but resolved instead to make known our approval without reservations.

In the autumn of 1934 I had received an order from the Emperor to bring out a memorandum on the Abyssinian military and political situation and the measures necessary to be taken with regard to it. This memorandum was followed in the spring of 1935 by a scheme for the deployment of the forces, and their division into regiments, with particulars of their strength and formation, and of the setting up of bases, in the event of war with Italy. The contents of these proposals cannot, of course, be given here. To show his sincere will to peace the Emperor directed that all military measures which might be construed as aggression on the part of Abyssinia should, in so far as it was possible, be carefully avoided. To deprive the Italians of opportunities of provoking frontier skirmishes which might afterwards be described as attacks, the Emperor issued orders as early as spring 1935 for all frontier troops to withdraw at least twenty miles from the border.

In June 1935 I was ordered by the Emperor to

draft instructions for resisting enemy air attacks and for the protection of the civil population from these; also general principles and instructions for the waging of ruthless guerilla warfare. Copies of these instructions were distributed in large numbers to the troops and authorities in all parts of the country.

Not until the Italian Government had rejected the proposals of the Committee of Five at the end of September 1935, as already described, and the work of mediation must be considered to have broken down for good, did the Emperor issue an order for general mobilisation as far as the term is applicable to Abyssinia. The result of this delay was that the Abyssinian forces were not mustered when the Italians advanced over the frontiers; but it had the great advantage from the political point of view that no doubt could arise as to who was the aggressor. From a military point of view the Italian advantage was of little importance, as it was no part of the Abyssinian plan to meet the invader at the frontier, and there would be time enough when the enemy had advanced into the almost roadless, broken terrain of Abyssinia. The political advantage gained was seen to outweigh the military disadvantage.

Thanks to this action on the part of Abyssinia, the League had no course but to label Italy as the aggressor, which it did during the first half of October, and, partially at any rate, take the appropriate steps recommended in Article XVI of the League of Nations Covenant.

XIII

THE JOURNEY HOME

As early as January 1935 I had had a heart attack brought on by the altitude of Addis Ababa combined with the strain of my work. In March and April other attacks followed. Dr. Hanner assured me then that to remain in Addis Ababa was to risk my life, and that the intervals between attacks would become shorter and shorter unless I descended to lower levels. However, with my hands full of interesting and important work I would not listen to the doctor's advice. His diagnosis, nevertheless, proved correct. By September the intervals had shrunk to about a week, and during the latter half of that month I had three attacks following closely on one another, the last one so serious that I realised the necessity of obeying the doctor's now peremptory orders. I therefore asked the Emperor to be allowed to resign my post on and from December 1st, 1935, and until then take the two months' leave due to me.

On September 27th I received a farewell audience of the Emperor, and I shall never forget the kindness he showed me then. With gratitude, happiness and pride I shall remember the time during which

it was given to me to serve and work with His Majesty the Emperor Haile Selassie I, whose wisdom, greatness of mind, devotion to duty and capacity for work I shall always think of as a shining example.

On October 1st I left Addis Ababa by train and arrived three days later in red-hot Jibuti. During the halt at Diré Dawa I had had a long conversation with Dejazmatch Nassebu, the commander-in-chief of the southern front and Governor of the provinces of Harar and Ogaden. On October 5th I took a motor-launch out into the Jibuti roadstead and went aboard the German ship *Ussukuma*, of the East African Line, for the voyage recommended by the doctor—to Hamburg via the Cape of Good Hope.

At Jibuti I had succeeded in escaping the reporters, with the result that in many papers I was announced as missing. However, by means of telegrams hither and thither the press at last tracked me down, and with that, as will appear, all incognito in the ports was out of the question.

As soon as I had boarded the *Ussukuma* anchor was weighed and we stood out to sea with Aden as our first objective. On the following morning the purser came to show me an extract from the Italian paper *Regime Fascista*, which vowed that if I were to fall into the hands of the blackshirts I should be shot like a robber chief. We made merry over this childishness; but in reality it is a grave matter that a régime which publishes such empty

threats has power to inflict disease and death on thousands upon thousands of innocent people in order to retain its status as a Power, and to divert attention from the difficulties into which it has plunged its own country.

This may seem an over-simplification of the problem; yet in honesty one must finally admit that herein lies the root of the trouble. For while it is certainly true that this war is a move in the political game in which the relation of France and Italy to Germany, the Danubian states and the Balkans, and the interests of the British Empire, etc., are all factors; yet behind it all, where Italy is concerned, lies the desire to overcome or avert difficulties within her own borders.

A dictatorship can, at a certain point in a nation's life, be not only necessary but wholesome. The ancient Romans understood that. But such a dictatorship must originate from the free will of the people, and be limited to the time during which it is really needful. A dictatorship achieved by force, maintaining its power for an indefinite period by means of police, concentration camps and sentences of banishment, is a danger not only to its own people but for international peace. For there are two factors in particular which cause difficulties in such a régime, and which cannot be controlled by command or by violence; namely, money and freedom of thought.

To justify his continued existence the dictator is forced to adopt many measures which may often

be right in themselves, but which entail expenditure disproportionate to the revenue and threaten the freedom of the individual. Then, as dictatorship often brings with it a certain economic isolation from other countries, the result sooner or later will be the involving of the country in difficulties, which in their turn breed discontent, even if this is not allowed expression. To divert attention from these difficulties and to urge the people on to further efforts, be it with or against its will, the dictator is tempted to resort to force abroad as well. A war of conquest, like the present assault on Abyssinia, will be the means by which the threatened catastrophe will be averted, or at any rate delayed.

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At noon on October 6th the sun-baked rocks of Aden rose above the horizon, and in the afternoon we ran into harbour. Forts bristling with guns reared their dark forms, and the roadstead was full of warships: Britannia rules the waves!

Next day, having taken cargo and passengers on board, the *Ussukuma* sailed in burning sun and heavy heat and set a course for Mombasa in Kenya Colony.

The days, measured off by routine, ran their even way. Now came the reaction after suspense and strain, and scenes passed as in a dream. At Mombasa the moon threw a glittering bridge between the palm-clad beaches and splashed silver

on the weathered walls of the Jesus Fort. Tanga and Dar-es-Salaam rose up like green oases, where German order and cleanliness could still be traced, and the island of Zanzibar lay like a gleaming pearl on the light green waters.

Zanzibar—the word will bring back to me always all that is beautiful: the scent of clove carnations, oranges and tangerines hanging heavy and red, the proudly held heads of the pineapples, the gold of bananas shining between masses of foliage, coconut-palms waving in the warm breeze; and, encircling all, the long, foaming breakers rolling lazily in towards the snow-white, sandy shore. And along the narrow streets that twist between white houses with their richly carved mahogany doorways and their lattice windows, true Romance walks on stealthy feet. Here was comfort for tired nerves and restless thoughts!

Southward we sailed. Heavy heat changed to pleasant coolness as the Portuguese towns passed in review: the desolate Porto Amelia, old Mozambique with its fort, modern Beira and Lorenzo Marques—all with surprisingly neat, well-kept houses, broad boulevards and good harbours.

British influence, already perceptible in the Portuguese colonies, was very noticeable when we ran into Durban harbour. After an unforgettable day spent in this beautiful, well-built town, partly in company with two pleasant fellow-passengers and partly with the Swedish consul, Mr. Lindholm, and my friend Carl-August Wicander and

his delightful wife, we continued the journey to Cape Town.

In tearing storm and raging seas the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic met. For a couple of days our vessel rolled and pitched as though possessed, working her way slowly and painfully through the seas. At last one evening we reached Cape Town, twelve hours late. In the half-darkness we could only dimly realise the beauty of the town and its surroundings, but in the morning we were richly repaid. The day was brilliant, the air cold and clear; Table Mountain had laid aside its cloud-cap and appeared in all its rugged beauty. The view from the slopes over the town and bay imprints itself for ever on the memory.

However, this chapter is not intended for a record of travel impressions in the ordinary sense—that is another story. From Cape Town we worked northwards along the west coast of Africa. In that ice-cold air Lüderitz Bay, with its bare rocks and sandy deserts, was bleak and comfortless. Not a blade of green was to be seen in the little town, whose industries—diamonds and lobster-fishing—are at a standstill, owing to the state of world markets. There exists one tree in the town, it seems, planted in a pot; and this tree is transported in a cart on great occasions such as christenings, weddings or funerals, and placed outside the house where the ceremony is to take place. Every drop of fresh water must be brought by steamer and is sold by the litre.

At Walfish Bay, which is also surrounded by desert as far as the eye can see, the Norwegian colours fluttered proudly over the biggest buildings in the town—the whaling station—and over thirty or so whalers lying at anchor in the roads; a sight to swell a northern heart.

The Portuguese towns, Lobito and Loanda, the latter boasting a fine seventeenth-century fort, gave one about the same impression as their sisters on the east coast. Now the warmth began to return, and when we passed the mouth of the Congo River, damp heavy heat lay over the muddy water that was visible far out to sea. Twenty-four hours later we crossed the Line once more, this time with the customary ceremonies. Neptune and wife came aboard with a varied suite, and all who could not produce certificates of previous baptism were hilariously soaped, shaved and ducked in the swimming-pool.

As we approached the mouth of the Cameroon River the mountain of the same name climbed out of the sea; a mighty solitary cone soaring 13,000 feet above the surrounding swamps. Its sharp silhouette stood dark and menacing against an opal sky, and snow on the crown of this colossus shone in the setting sun. Another vision of beauty not soon to be forgotten.

After steaming past the deltas of the Niger—the river where Edgar Wallace's great characters Sanders, Hamilton and 'Bones' had their adventures—we reached Lagos one morning: the home of

fertility, malaria and yellow fever. There we stayed for two days—while the *Ussukuma* took a cargo of cocoa on board—and made expeditions into the well-built, well-kept town and its environs. Africa appears here in the form which I believe it takes in the imagination of the average European—or at any rate in that of the average northerner: damp, heavy heat, what I should describe as violent fruitfulness of both flora and fauna, seething crowds of men and beasts, and vegetation which nothing can discourage. A road which, according to report, had been newly cleared a week before was found so overgrown on our arrival that we had to turn. Quite near the town one may come upon jungle, with colossal trees and seemingly impenetrable undergrowth. As for the animals, they bring to mind one's schooldays and old Magister Roth's description in his geography: 'Antelopes and zebras race across the plains . . . crocodiles and hippopotami wallow in the muddy waters. . . . Here is the home of the lion, and here in the forests of the Guinea coast roams the terrible gorilla.'

The voyage was resumed. Accra, on the Gold Coast, gleamed white above the surf. On a headland lay Fort Christiansborg, gleaming like a fairy palace and reminding one of the time when the Dannebrog fluttered above its bastions. Now from the flagstaff floats the Union Jack. As soon as we had anchored in the roads a fleet of rowing-boats numbering about forty danced out through the surf. In each boat about ten naked black rowers sat

on the gunwales rather as a lady used to sit a horse, and propelled themselves along with three-cornered paddles. It was like a picture from a boy's adventure-book; but actually it was not as romantic as it appeared. Every boat carried a number of sacks of cocoa—each weighing 130 lb., the standard burden for a man in Africa—which were hoisted on board while the *Ussukuma* rolled and the boats danced up and down like nutshells in the great rollers.

We weighed anchor in the afternoon, and late at night three days later came into Freetown harbour. In the waxing and waning light from the lighthouse at the harbour-mouth we could make out the wrecks of two steamers which had paid dearly for loving the land too well. We could get no idea in this pitch darkness of the old pirate harbour.

Next morning the burning sun lit up a vast panorama. The heights of Sierra Leone, covered with the richest tropical vegetation, bounded the horizon, and scattered over the slopes towards the shore lay the town. A motor drive inland bore out one's first impression that Sierra Leone is a glorious piece of border to the vast carpet of Africa. The road ran up steep hills and down into narrow valleys; clear rivers and streams shot downwards, foaming and glittering; palms, bread-fruit trees, orange, mango and fig trees stood thickly round the countless negro huts, and now and then sudden, enchanting views would be revealed of the

undulating landscape and the ocean gleaming in the sun.

The mouth of the Rio Sierra Leone was for a long time a favourite refuge of pirates and slave-drivers. The first citizens of Freetown were freed negro slaves who had been brought back to Africa from America by the British Government; and to-day black still predominates over white in the streets. Here, as everywhere else in Africa, where Nature is most prodigal with her gifts, sickness and death lurk beneath the abundance. Sleeping-sickness, malaria and yellow fever claim many victims, both white and coloured.

Soaking with damp heat we returned to the ship. By noon the *Ussukuma* was once more heading for the mirror-like, open sea, and we had left our last port of call on the African continent. In the glowing, almost torturing heat the misty tops of Sierra Leone sank gradually beneath the horizon. The African adventure was a closed chapter.

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On my departure from Addis Ababa the Emperor had expressed the hope that when I had left Abyssinia I should continue to work on its behalf. There proved to be no difficulty in finding opportunity for this on my voyage round Africa. As soon as the press discovered me on board the *Ussukuma*, all possibility of avoiding its representatives was gone. Hardly had we come alongside the quay or dropped anchor before the reporters were

aboard, raining questions. As there was, as a rule, no time to check their versions of the interviews, these were often strange, to say the least. To me, however, the most important thing was that the Abyssinian point of view should be known. Everywhere in Africa I was met by a flood of sympathy for the Emperor and his people. Sometimes, in some papers, this sympathy took a form which Italy found wounding. Unfortunately this could not be helped and, compared with what Italy has achieved in her propaganda, the remarks in the African newspapers were mild.

At Beira I was visited by a deputation of twenty or so representatives of the British-Indian Mahomedan Association; a visit which I welcomed. For there are in Abyssinia, particularly in the south-east, large numbers of Mahomedans. It has been hinted by Italians that the followers of the Prophet are in opposition to the Christian population, and therefore constitute an unreliable element, with leanings towards Italy. On this occasion the President of the Association, Mr. Essmail Kassam Vally, thanked me for my work in Abyssinia, told me that the Association was prepared to do what lay in its power to help that country and asked me how they could best further its cause. As the question was one of some delicacy I answered that the best course was to support the Abyssinian Red Cross with money and other means, but for the present to take no other action. Those who know how close is the tie of Islam within and outside

Africa will appreciate the value of this deputation as an aid to ascertaining the Mahomedan attitude towards the Italo-Abyssinian conflict.

It has been declared by some that the Abyssinian appeal to the League of Nations was without result, and that the Emperor has suffered severely for his naïve faith in its powers.

Whatever one may reproach the Emperor for, he is certainly not naïve. Nearly twenty years' experience as regent and Emperor has given him not only a knowledge of men but also insight into and understanding of those factors which affect the political game. As was pointed out before, he realised very well that a state which wished to keep its freedom and independence must be prepared to defend them by force; and although he had no blind trust in the power of the League to prevent Italy's long-planned assault, he considered himself bound as a League member to draw its attention to his country's threatened situation. He had also two other reasons for so acting. He desired that the Italo-Abyssinian question might be examined by a body to which other states beside the Great Powers belonged, and he wanted Abyssinia to be openly vindicated. It cannot be denied that through his appeal to the League of Nations he has at least partially attained his object.

He has not indeed succeeded, despite his sincere desire for peace and willingness to make sacrifices for its sake, in saving his people and his country from the curse of war; yet by the intervention of

the League the court of arbitration was set up which pronounced Abyssinia guiltless of the incident given by Italy as the reason for attacking. Sanctions imposed since Italy was judged by the League to be the aggressor will certainly greatly impede that country, limited though they have been hitherto. Lastly, it has been impossible for Italian diplomacy to win sympathy for its merciless methods, or for the Italian command to pursue its plans of conquest unnoticed. The whole world is following, most of it with sympathy, Abyssinia's fight for existence. The Italian acts of violence, which are a contravention of international agreements—the League Covenant and the Kellogg Pact—must be played out with the curtain raised. The attitude of spectators and critics will certainly influence the success or failure of the drama of bloodshed now being enacted in the theatre of the world.

Of enormous importance for all, and not least for the smaller states, is the question whether in the future the League of Nations will have the power and the will to fulfil the terms of its Covenant. Should this not be the case; should the ancient African Empire, despite its heroic defence, be sacrificed like a pawn in the political game—then not only will the international loss be great, but the white race will also have committed or permitted a crime which adds still further to its already heavy burden of guilt.

APPENDIX

THE ITALO-ABYSSINIAN TREATY OF AUGUST 2, 1928¹

HIS MAJESTY VICTOR EMMANUEL III, King of Italy, and Her Majesty Zauditu, Empress of Abyssinia, are desirous of seeing the friendship between their two States still further strengthened and maintained and economic relations between the two countries promoted.

Accordingly, Commendatore Giuliano Cora, Minister Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Italy, in the name of His Majesty Victor Emmanuel the Third and His Successors, and His Imperial Highness Tafari Makonnen, Heir to the Throne and Regent of the Abyssinian Empire, in the name of the Empress Zauditu, in His own name and in the name of Their Successors.

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1

There shall be constant peace and perpetual friendship between the Kingdom of Italy and the Abyssinian Empire.

Article 2

Each Government undertakes not to engage, under any pretext, in action calculated to injure or prejudice the independence of the other, and the two Governments undertake to safeguard the interests of their respective countries.

¹ From *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. 129, pp. 1-2, by permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.

Article 3

Both Governments undertake to develop and promote trade between the two countries.

Article 4

Italian nationals, subjects and protected persons, on their establishment in Abyssinia, and Abyssinians on establishment in Italy and her colonies, shall, in respect of their trade and labour, the necessities of life and maintenance, and everything concerned with the exercise of their occupations, trade and labour, be bound to observe and respect the laws of the State in which they reside.

It is understood that the provisions of Article 7 of the Treaty between the Abyssinian Empire and the French Republic, concluded on January 10, 1908, shall continue to apply to the above-mentioned Italian nationals, subjects and protected persons in Abyssinia as long as the said Treaty remains in force.

Article 5

Both Governments undertake to submit to a procedure of conciliation and arbitration disputes which may arise between them and which it may not have been possible to settle by ordinary diplomatic methods, without having recourse to armed force. Notes shall be exchanged by common agreement between the two Governments regarding the manner of appointing arbitrators.

Article 6

The present Treaty, which shall be registered with the League of Nations, shall be ratified, and the exchange of ratifications shall take place at Addis Ababa as soon as possible.

Article 7

The present Treaty is concluded for a period of twenty years from the date of the exchange of ratifications. On the expiry of this period it shall be renewable from year to year.

Done in two copies, of identical tenor, in the two official languages, Italian and Amharic, one copy to remain in the hands of the Italian Government and the other in the hands of the Abyssinian Government.

ADDIS ABABA, August 2, 1928, Year VI.

(The twenty-sixth day of Hamlé

of the Year of Grace 1901.)

(L.S.) GIULIANO CORA

(L.S.) TAFARI MAKONNEN,
Heir to the Throne of
Abyssinia

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The Heir to the Throne of Abyssinia, TAFARI MAKONNEN,
to HIS EXCELLENCY COMMENDATORE CORA, Minister
Plenipotentiary for the Kingdom of Italy

Peace be with you.

Referring to the Treaty of Friendship concluded on the 26th day of Hamlé, 1920, in Article 5 of which Treaty is contained a clause relating to the choice of arbitrators which both Governments according to mutual agreement shall select, we inform you that we interpret this clause as follows :

The Abyssinian Government shall choose two arbitrators and the Italian Government shall choose two arbitrators, and these four shall settle the dispute if they can come to an agreement; if however they are unable to come to an agreement they shall together choose a fifth

arbitrator, and the dispute shall be settled by majority vote.

The 27th day of Hamlé, 1920

Sealed: The Heir to the Throne of Abyssinia.

TAFARI MAKONNEN

To His Highness the Heir to the Throne of Abyssinia

TAFARI MAKONNEN

IMPERIAL HIGHNESS,

I have the honour to acknowledge herewith the receipt of the Note in which your Imperial Highness informs me that in the view of the Abyssinian Government, the clause in Article 5 of the Treaty of Friendship concluded by us on the 26th day of Hamlé in the year of grace 1920, which unabridged reads as follows: 'Notes relating to the method of choosing arbitrators shall according to mutual agreement be exchanged between the two States' shall be interpreted as follows: The Abyssinian Government shall choose two arbitrators and the Italian Government two arbitrators; these four arbitrators shall together settle the dispute. If they are unable to reach an agreement they shall together choose a fifth arbitrator and the dispute shall be settled by majority vote.

I have noted this communication and assure your Imperial Highness that the above corresponds to the interpretation given by the Italian Government to Article 5 of the Treaty of Friendship.

I beg to assure Your Highness of my deepest respect.

G. CORA, King's Minister

